





Antique G-Ps

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CORADDI: The Magazine



Mark Gottsegen

the Fine Arts at UNC-G

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Dawn Ellen Nubel

ART DIRECTOR
Jim Clodfelter

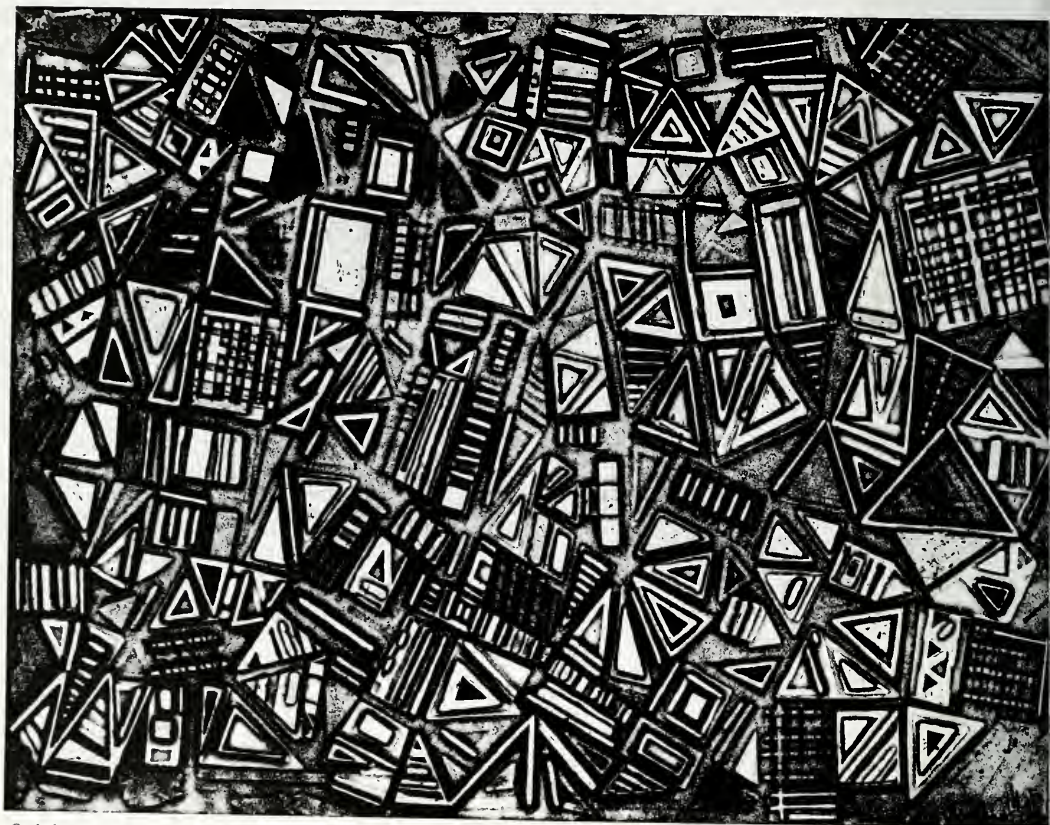
COPY EDITOR
Mark A. Corum

DESIGN ASSISTANT
Desiree Johnson

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Origins Uncertain

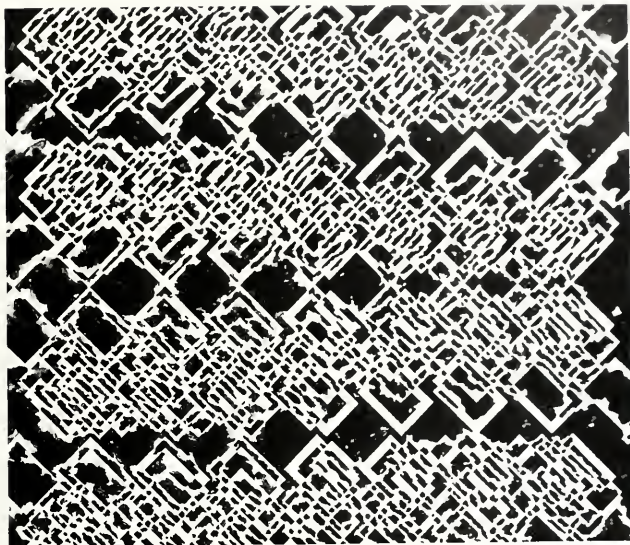
Robert Gerhauser

Short Story Competition

Virginia Dumont, Grand Prize
Julia Baucher, Second Place
Jon M. Obermeyer, Third Place
Jennifer Sault, Fourth Place
Pamela Postma, Fifth Place

Photography Competition

Christopher Hauselman, Grand Prize
Inga Floyd-Kear, Second Place
Rebecca Sexton, Third Place
Crystal Wynkoop, Honorable Mention



Attrition/Accretion #2

Robert Gerhart

contents.

SHORT STORIES

"Roof" by Jon M. Obermeyer, 4.

"Adele's Room" by Pamela Postma, 11.

"Buzz' Dilemma" by Julia Bauchner, 14.

"Just A Train Ride" by Jennifer Sault, 38.

"Disengaging the Connections" by Virginia Dumont, 41.

FEATURED ARTISTS

Robert Gerhart, 8.

Walter Barker, 40.

Mark Gottsegen, 44.

POEM

Eugene V. Grace, 18.

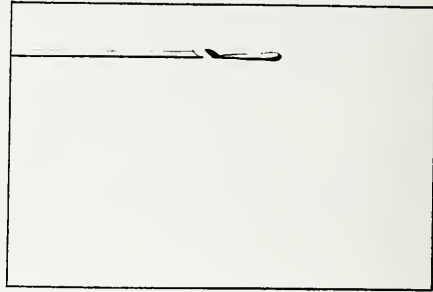
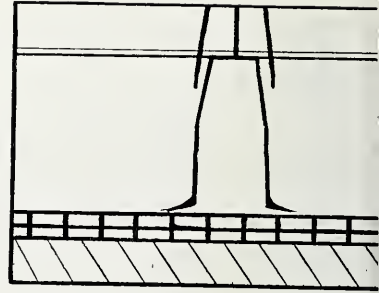
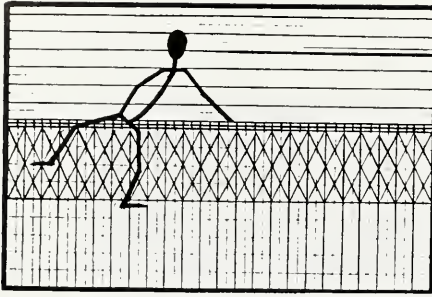
PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION, 19.

FRED CHAPPELL

An Interview by Ian McDowell, 32.

FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER

Sue C., 46.



R

After they had taken Bergstresser to the hospital and the police had left, some of the other tenants came by my room and wanted to know what the three of us had been doing up there in the first place. Rizzo checked my closet and wanted to know how a former sailor like Bergstresser could have possibly fallen off a roof; Perez stayed in the open doorway and insinuated that either Vernon or I had pushed him. When I told them that he had jumped nobody wanted to believe me.

It had been one of those Monday evenings in early spring when everybody moped around the Old Monterrey Hotel and thought about what a lousy day it had been. The shock of going from the weekend to the first day of the week was like having the fog come in off the Pacific and within an hour chill a gloriously clear afternoon. It was the time of year between the holidays and summer when nothing you do seems to make a difference, and everything seems to stand still. Maybe it especially affects those of us who are in limbo.

Most of us who board at the Old Monterrey are amateur transients who could not stay glued down anywhere else: runaways, contract breakers, divorcees, widowers, and starters-over of all types. The hotel serves as a temporary nook on the way up from the circle of flophouses surrounding the bus and train stations, and a haven from the slippery world of fidelities and payment schedules. After the divorce I had only planned on staying here a month to find some equilibrium, but I'm coming upon my first year already.

After distributing the Monday afternoon edition of the *Examiner* to vendors, I had taken a shower when I got home, so I was late coming down to dinner. The dining room was empty except for Ver-

non my landlord, who was sitting by himself at a table in a corner window. He nodded when I sat down at an adjacent table, then turned back to contemplate the cigarette smoke in the ashtray in front of him.

Constantine saw me come in and brought out my dinner, of rolls, and a pint carton of milk. I could tell that Bergstresser was cooking that night by the pale color of the peas (canned, grainy texture of the potatoes (instant), and the tough outline of the Salisbury steak. I told Constantine not to bother me with dessert with my coffee. I knew it would be the box of cake with the lemon frosting. After picking through the dessert, I tried to rouse Vernon from his despondancy:

"Know of anything going on tonight?"

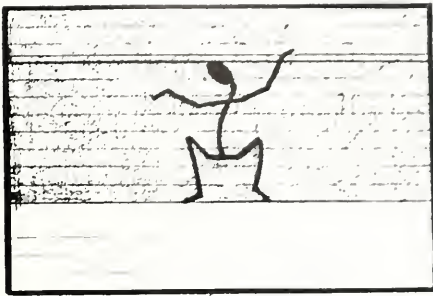
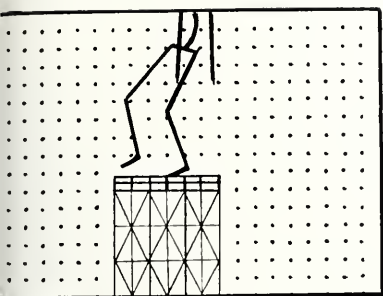
"Giant's opener at Candlestick."

"You going?"

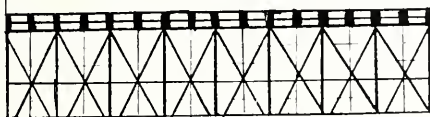
"Not unless they're playing the Braves," said Vernon Laraboo III, eldest son of the prominent Atlanta Carbos. Rumor had it that Vernon's grandfather was behind the early marketing of Coca-Cola, when it went from being the syrup-based concoction in a bottle to a druggist to a carbonated beverage you could pluck from metal bins at country stores and gas stations. The Carbos family had been in the law business (Carbo, Carbo & Quinn), and began sending their male offspring north of the Mason-Dixon for prep, collegiate, and legal schooling. After Harvard Law and passing the Georgia bar exam, Vernon had lived at home and worked in the family business until falling deeply and incurably in love at the age of thirty.

"Sarah's on PBS tonight," Vernon said to the tree outside the dining room window, as much as he said it for my benefit.

"Really." Sarah was the girl he had fallen for, the girl h-



JON M. OBERMEYER



et over.
a Traviata." With the Metropolitan in New York City."
 ou plan on watching?"
 m not sure."
 emembered the story Vernon had told me on New Year's Eve.
 issed his family and had drunk a little too much sherry, and
 ered into the downstairs lounge where I was reading *The*
ese Falcon.
 rnon sat down and told me how he had met Sarah Tate at one
 s mother's summer dinner parties, and how he was so taken
 the rising opera singer with doe-eyes and auburn hair that
 ud to hide in the kitchen to regain his composure. He then began
 y the family box at the performing arts center, attired I assume
 rmal gray and an ascot and gazing on Miss Sarah Tate from
 e. These attendances brought Vernon unexpected publicity as
 ain society columnist sighted him as the next eligible bachelor
 he horizon, even though he had been eligible for quite some
 . Undaunted, he gained confidence and escorted Sarah Tate
 as, charity auctions, and more dinner parties. When he was
 t to have a talk with his father regarding the mysteries of court-
 and matrimony, Sarah Tate informed him that she was audi-
 ing with Adler's San Francisco Opera and would soon be mov-
 to the West Coast.
 ter two months and no word from Sarah Tate, Vernon took
 first vacation since passing the bar and flew out to San Fran-
 o to surprise her. She had sounded hesitant over the phone when
 alled from his hotel, but she invited him to her apartment, in
 t Vernon thought an expectant and excited tone. Once at the
 tment he found out the reason for her nervousness when in-
 ued to a gentleman Sarah had met at Curtis, an assistant con-

ductor of darker shade of skin. This was as disturbing as the revela-
 tion of Sarah's clandestine romantic involvement. After an
 obligatory cocktail, Vernon feigned "jet lag" and took a taxi to his
 suite at the famous old hotel atop one of the city's famous hills.

Postponing an immediate retreat to Atlanta and an inevitable
 senior partnership, Vernon spent the next day in bed with the mor-
 ning *Chronicle* and ate meals brought by room service. At sunset
 he opened the drapes and looked at the Golden Gate bridge and
 the dark-blue bay until it got dark. When he called Sarah Tate that
 night, she told him nothing more could come of things, that it had
 been "a shooting star that burned brightly for a brief time, then
 faded."

The next morning Vernon took the cable cars to Chinatown and
 Fisherman's Wharf, but by the end of the week he had wandered
 beyond the tourist quadrant to explore the city's diverse
 neighborhoods: Salvadorian, Laotian, Russian, Irish, Brazilian, Croa-
 tian. Still infatuated with Sarah Tate, he succumbed to the fascina-
 tions of the city. He went to his first skin flick and learned too many
 new things, attended a poetry reading to benefit a Jewish Lesbians
 Woman's shelter, and took a streetcar down to the Cliff House and
 took a walk on the coarse dark sand in the November wind, which
 he liked better than the Gulf or Hilton Head.

One afternoon while dawdling near Sarah Tate's neighborhood,
 he saw a dark-green awning that hung over the buckling sidewalk,
 with white-stencilled letters that said: "The Old Monterrey Hotel."
 Four floors of brick on the side of a hill, the Old Monterrey was
 the only residence hotel in an exclusive neighborhood known for
 its renovated Victorians. He liked the sound of the name. He liked
 the location. He wired to have one of his trust funds liquidated and

bought it, and the former owner returned immediately to his native Yugoslavia.

After sending several delegations to lure him home, Vernon's family settled back and waited for the novelty to wear off. They kept the partnership open, and forwarded his law journals and alumni periodicals. A great aunt from Savannah sent him a telegram asking what it was like to be a slumlord in Sodom.

It was getting dark in the dining room. I drank coffee and watched Vernon light another cigarette. Constantine was setting tables for breakfast, and Bergstresser was sitting on his stool in the kitchen. The meal was cooked and the pots were scrubbed, so now he could drink and be nasty as he wanted. He was well aware that nobody liked his cooking, but Vernon had a soft spot and kept Bergstresser on in exchange for half of the rent.

I told Vernon I was going to the store a little later, and asked if he wanted anything.

"Hmmm. I don't know."

"How about if I drop by about nine and check with you then?"

"All right," he said and looked directly at me for the first time.

"If I'm not in my room I'll be in the office."

"Good deal," I told him. It was a healthy sign. The T.V. was in his room, which meant he might not fixate on Sarah Tate after all, and do some paperwork in his office. I left him and went up to my room to take a nap.

The closest bar to the Old Monterrey was twelve blocks away on Union Street. If you didn't want to walk, it took half an hour at night and a transfer on the No.22 Fillmore bus to get there. The price of one drink anyplace on Union Street would buy a decent meal elsewhere, since the first three dollars were going towards fern upkeep and an overhead of Barbary Coast decor.

Yet just three blocks from home, Mr. and Mrs. Ng kept the Balboa Liquors open until 11 p.m. They carried hard stuff, a good selection of beer, and other essentials such as Shermans, foil packs of smoked almonds, and 'Bama pecan pies. On the wall behind the register, the Ng's had hung framed graduation portraits of their four children who had all attended the University of California at Berkeley, lived in suburban Walnut Creek and Orinda, and drove into the city in brightly-colored BMWs to visit their parents. The Ng's I had learned, had fled Saigon in 1973 with just a few pieces of the family jewelry, and were always reminding us of the progress they and their offspring had made in the new land.

Last summer, seeking solitude and privacy from urban intensity, I had begun the habit of purchasing several German dark ales at Balboa Liquors and taking them up to the roof of the Old Monterrey at night. I had heard that somebody sunbathed up there during the day, so I searched for the route to the top. From the fire escape at the back of the fourth floor, a skimpy ladder led up the outside of the building with the handles curving over the ledge at the top. Once I got up there, I found the roof to be covered with squishy tarpaper and gravel, surrounded by a waist-high parapet. In one corner there was an ancient porcelain bathtub probably hoisted there by some bored genius, and in the very center of the roof were placed a pair of corroded and stained chairs that resembled the ones below in the dining room.

That first night it was very quiet. I could feel a breeze coming off the Pacific, and flanks of fog were advancing inland unchallenged, engulfing the red and white transmission tower on Sutro Heights. To the north I could see the red blinking warning lights atop the tips of the Golden Gate bridge span. I could see lights in the buildings downtown, as janitors and auditors worked through the pyramidal, hexagonal, and spiral-shaped towers built on bayside

landfill. To the south, I watched the evening flights take off from the airport, twin beams rushing into the sky. Even sober, they seemed to me like cars driving up the sky, before they turned over the bay.

Monday night, as I walked up Divisadero with six boxes of Danish lager, I decided to introduce my landlord to the plot of his own rooftop. Beyond the small lobby and the dining room, Vernon kept an official office, even though most rental deals and agreements were settled in hallways, doorways, and stairwells. When I knocked on the knotty pine door I heard his voice muffled inside. It was after nine and Sarah was probably well into her first song.

"Tyler," Vernon nodded in greeting and acknowledged my presence with the sack in my right hand. He was in the wooden swivel chair with his stockinged feet propped on a corner of the desk. He had been reading the latest Solzenitsyn "Gulag" novel.

"How's the book?"

"I'm not watching the opera tonight," he boasted, laying the sack on his stomach and leaning further back in the chair.

I weighed the statement of strength and looked around the office, chuckling at the accumulated decor. Since many of the tenants were struggling artists who cannot and will not hold down traditional forms of employment, Vernon had become a patron of the arts. By default, accepting artistic output in lieu of rent. Mobiles of wood and motor oil cans floated above the orange, pink, and blue cretaceous plaster casts of contorted human forms; and construction paper plants bloomed atop pedestals of twine-bound stacks of old press poetry. The opera buff had become the soft-hearted collector of creative flotsam, the sugar daddy for the city's low-publication artistic subculture.

When I saw he was not going to offer me a seat, I asked if he had ever been on the roof of the Old Monterrey. He said no, at me as if he had never realized it existed, as if his domain was limited by the ceiling on the fourth floor. I told him about the fire escape and the ladder.

"Do many people go up there?" he seemed to ask with the hope of the only boy not invited to the birthday party. When I told him I was the only one I knew of, he declined my offer and picked up the book. As I turned to leave he asked:

"You're not going up there now are you?"

"It looks like it," I said raising the beers, whose beaded moisture was spotting the sack.

"Well let me at least see where this ladder is," he said, and Solzenitsyn went onto the desk and the argyle-clad feet dropped to the floor.

We met on the fourth floor landing, where the scruffy tan carpet joins the thin black and red pattern that looks like a checkerboard. When I got there Vernon was wearing his lime-green Augustus golf windbreaker, and was talking to Nick Rizzo about a telephone service. Nick was a fifteen-year-old con artist, legally emancipated from his parents and working as a street musician. He played saxophone at Ghiradelli Square and the Cannery, and had a block-printed note in his open case that said: "Help me get to New York to see my family." Nick claimed he cleared \$300 a week during tourist season, but had to constantly change location.

"He wants a payphone on this floor," Vernon told me as we descended down the hall. The only payphone was on the third floor where I lived. Personal phones were rare because newcomers could give any local credit references and nobody wanted to front a \$75 deposit. It was much easier to save your dimes. We went to Bergstresser's room and then the hallway took a dogleg left, ending at a small window above a radiator. Vernon pointed

indow: "Here?"
he place," I told him, setting down the sack and forcing open
window with the sound of a crackling firecracker. After they
ainted last fall, I had to chisel the edges to get it open. I crawl-
and stepped onto the fire escape. Four floors below was the
nted-over backyard, and the breeze attacked my worn slacks
unprotected head. Vernon handed me the sack through the
ow.

"Want to see the rest?" I asked. He poked his head out the win-
and looked up the ladder:

"Doesn't look very safe."

"Piece of cake," I reassured him. Climbing was never a problem.
ing down with a buzz on was more of a trick, always afraid
adder will come loose from the stucco, or afraid of a slippery
or fear of the window being locked and having to unwind
fire escape to get down to the ground.

I began climbing the ladder with the sack in one hand. Vernon
ured outside and tested the fire escape for possible violations
e building safety code. I heard him ask me what the view was
rom the top, and I told him he'd have to come up and see for
elf.

ot him up there, but he would not drink any of the beer. We
ed against the parapet and watched the planes drive in the sky.
on was telling me how I was a lifeguard who had saved him
drowning that night, when a voice bellowed from behind us
e the ladder came up:

"Hey you faggots!"

Bergstresser.

"Who is it?" Vernon asked me.

"Our chef."

"He is not a happy man."

"He's not well-liked," I told him. There was only so much you
I write-off to a bad childhood. We all knew about Mr.
Bergstresser's Trail of Tears. The neglected son of a successful
ster in Weatherford, Oklahoma, Bergstresser had rebelled by
ing the Navy. Following a brief career as a mess cook and a
onorable discharge, he took a lucrative culinary position on an
g off the Louisiana coast. Despite the excellent wages which
quandered in New Orleans, the weeks-at-a-time on the Gulf
n to affect his mental state. He did not mind being at sea as
as he minded that the rig wasn't going anywhere.

hen a roughneck insulted his Shrimp Louis one night,
Bergstresser had gone after him with a carving knife, and was sent
y on the next shore-bound helicopter. After buying a Greyhound
ripass with his severance pay, he floated around the western
s until he washed up at San Francisco, to take his place among
rest of the driftwood, corked bottles, and pieces of the wrack
came to rest at the Old Monterrey.

"Can't get enough privacy below deck, eh boys?" he taunted as
runched across the gravel roof.

"Hello Enoch," Vernon said.

"Who's that?" Bergstresser had stopped. It's your guardian angel
his lifeguard, I thought. He stepped closer and saw who was
ere. I raised my beer can and he sneered at me.

"You didn't look so good tonight at dinner," he told Vernon. "Still
king about your lady friend?"

Vernon said nothing. I tried to ignore the interruption and resume
conversation, but the lummoX kept at it:

"You know Vern, sometimes I think you play it up a bit much,
you think? I mean, all this moping about and sitting there
e dining room with your cigarette, looking out the window..."
shut up, you ungrateful slob," I heard myself say.

"None of your beeswax, Tyler," he replied, raising his fist to make
me flinch. Nothing could intimidate this thug. "Now Vern, if you
really want this broad to notice that you exist, you just can't
whimper around the house all day. You got to act."

"Now if you're so depressed that you just can't take your life
anymore, you can catch the No.28 bus up to the bridge and do a
nice swan dive. The Coast Guard spends a few hours looking for
your body, then you get a spot on page three of the *Chronicle* that
says you're number twenty-seven this year and number eight-
hundred-sixteen on the all time list."

We had turned our backs on him by that time, waiting for him
to take the hint and go away. Our ignoring him only roused his
rhetorical stance, interrupted at times by sips from his own bottl-
ed refreshment:

"Now, if you want to get her attention and maybe live to enjoy
it, you can save yourself fifty cents busfare and make your state-
ment from this here roof."

And he climbed onto the parapet to make his point. I got nervous
watching him up there, so I looked down to the street. I saw an
electric trolley bus whir up Jackson, and it had a huge black four-
digit identification number on the top that I never would've noticed
before. Vernon had frozen in place, and Bergstresser was holding
out his arms like a balancing trapeze artist:

"So you get up here," he continued, "and scream like a yahoo
until one of your neighbors, or tenants, calls the T.V. station. Pretty
soon even the police and the fire and rescue get wind of it. And
when they come up here to try and talk you down, you take advan-
tage of your growing audience and tell the little woman to 'come
on down!' And when they bring her through the crowd below in
the back seat of that unmarked Dodge Polara with the siren slap-
ped on its roof, you Vern, have got your moment. You're on top
of the world!"

"She's mine again?" I heard a voice whimper next to me.

"Hardly," said Bergstresser, taking a long pull. "She only came
because she doesn't want to be responsible for the mess."

"All right, we get the point," I said, about to grab his cuff and
pull him down, but he scampered along the parapet.

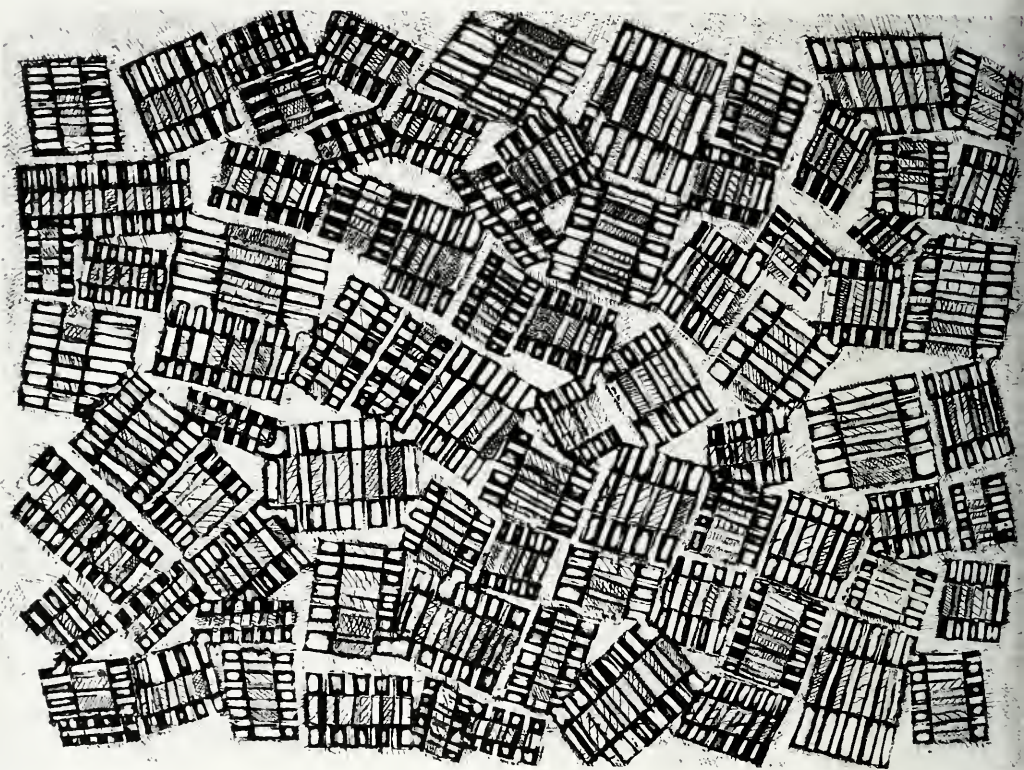
"So then my friend, you wait until they bring her up here and
she puts on her best pleading face, which of course the cameraman
for channel 4 has got a great close-up on. And then when she says
she's sorry... you wave good-bye."

And he did. It was so delicate and graceful, we did not even realize
at first what he had just done. It was not really a leap, but just
a simple step backwards. I saw him slip down the side of the
building, catch a section of cornice work, and land on his back on
a third-floor balcony.

Vernon asked if he was dead, but I didn't think so. By this time
Bergstresser had already started the moaning. I heard windows
opening, questioning voices from both sides of the street, and of
course the obligatory female scream. The paramedics came within
twenty minutes, but it was an hour before the police arrived. The
media never showed up.

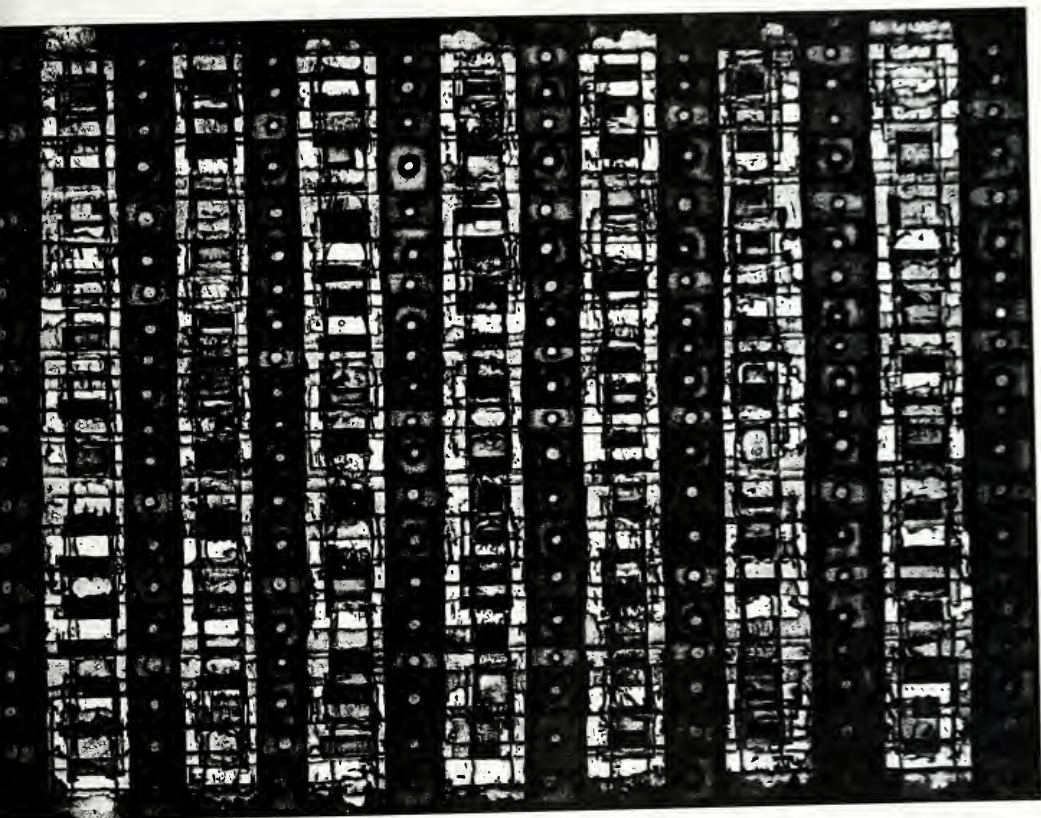
For a few moments there, before we walked back to the ladder,
I looked upon Bergstresser's sprawled form below. I realized that
it was those of us who came from elsewhere that give the city such
a bad name; the natives I have met are quite normal. There was
Bergstresser holding his skull with both hands and moaning, while
refugees from conquered Indochinese regimes were working two
jobs for that first house, and the self-exiled sons of promise became
landlords and grieved over lost love. Then there were those of us
for whom a spot like the Old Monterrey was a turning point. We
would either learn something or slip further away. ●

R o b e r t

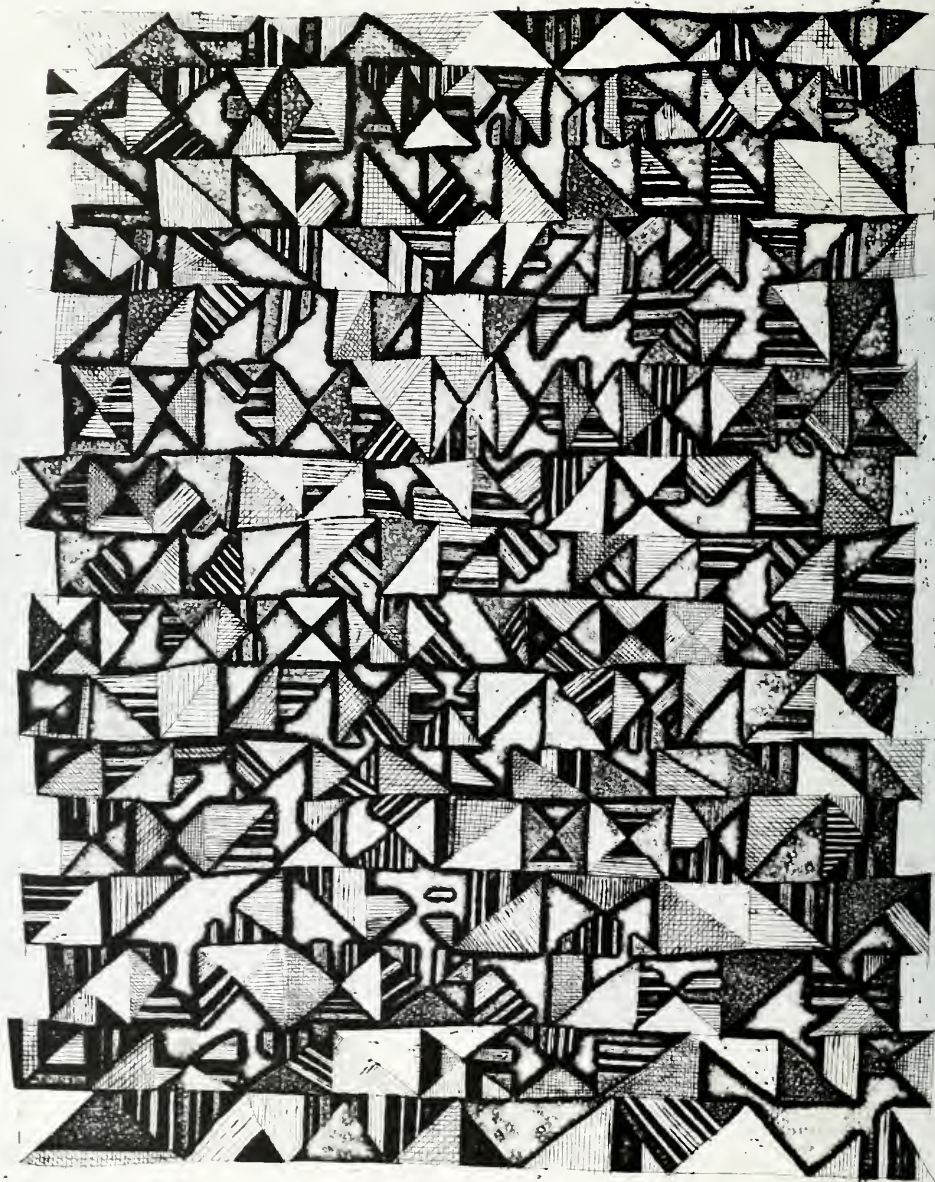


Logistic Jam

G e r h a r t



partments



West Wall



Adele's Room



her thirtieth birthday Adele Ingram announced that she was going to convert the attic into a studio and that if Mark wanted to give her a present he could please her best by helping her clear out all the junk that had accumulated up there over the past nine years.

"So, you're finally going to get back to painting?" said her husband, over the top of his newspaper. He wore reading glasses shaped like little crescent moons, and he peered at her over their tops like a judge interrogating a witness. "I was wondering when you were going to get around to it. Good for you."

"You'll help me then?" said Adele. She sat across from her husband, cradling a mug of steaming coffee in her two hands. Her cheeks were delicately flushed, her dark blonde hair pleasantly arranged. She looked fragile and young, except for the permanent smile lines around her eyes.

"I'll help, Mommy," said Millie, who had been concentratedly eating her cereal.

"I know you will, sugar plum," said Adele. She continued to gaze at the expanse of newspaper presented to her by her husband. It had become an habitual breakfast routine, this snatched reading of the paper back to front. She crinkled her eyes against the coffee steam and snuggled deeper into her puffy, quilted robe. "Well, Mark, will you help?"

"Sure. But not today. We're taking the McIver case to trial next week, and I've got an awful lot to do at the office. And don't forget; we're having dinner with the MacPhersons tonight. To celebrate Mark's birthday." He leaned over and pinched her cheek. He did it so fully, but when he stopped Adele had to rub her face to make it stop aching. "You pick up Gail at seven and meet us at the restaurant. Don't forget to pick her up."

"I won't forget." They were both remembering the time Adele had forgotten the MacPhersons were coming to dinner. Their guests had arrived with Mark at eight o'clock to find Adele in her bathtub and nothing in the refrigerator but some leftover tuna casserole. Mark had laughed it off, and the MacPhersons had returned for dinner the following week, but the memory galled her. She never did these things intentionally.

The house was silent after Mark left. It was early November, and early for snow, but a discouraging rain fell, dragging the last leaves from the trees onto the sodden ground. At the top of the house, the attic was cold and musty. The rain sounded louder here, and of drill beating against the roof. Millie lay on her stomach reading out the Palladian window that admitted light at floor level. Here she could watch the rain form crystal beads that thickened into teardrops before letting go of the eaves. Adele watched her daughter, aware that she would get little real help from but glad for the company.

It was a backbreaking job carrying heavy boxes down the retractable stairway leading to the second floor, and it wasn't much easier

hauling them the rest of the way to the garage where she piled them up for the trash collector. Most of the stuff was the sort of detritus that accumulates in every household: old books that no one would ever read again, clothes several seasons out of fashion, baby toys that Millie had outgrown but that Adele had hated to part with until now. She thought briefly about donating some of the things to the Goodwill or the Salvation Army, but that would complicate her plan, and she wanted to accomplish this transformation of the attic as expeditiously as possible. She couldn't explain to herself, let alone to anyone else, just why this project had taken on such importance for her, but during the past several weeks, as her birthday approached, she had felt more and more the need to do something. Part of this motivation undoubtedly stemmed from her getting older. At thirty her youth was unequivocally over; it was time to become something more, something real.

By lunchtime most of the larger boxes were gone. What remained were things Adele didn't know what to do with, mostly some odd pieces of furniture from her mother's house, a box of Christmas ornaments, several lengths of almost-new rope, and Mark's old law books. Finally she shoved everything that was left into a corner and threw an old chenille bedspread over it. All that remained was to sweep and scrub the floor and brush away the cobwebs. By mid-afternoon she had accomplished this and was ready to begin painting the rough walls white. At six she suddenly remembered that she had to feed Millie supper and get ready to go out herself. She hated leaving the job unfinished, and she stood at the top of the stairway for several minutes looking at the space she had completely painted and gave an idea of what the rest of the attic would look like when it was all done. It was now a bare, empty room that seemed much bigger than it had before. Adele loved its silence and sparseness. She would hang some plants in front of the window and set up her easel, but she wanted to keep this empty feeling. She wanted nothing here but what came from her own mind.

She was late getting to Gail's house, and by the time they got to the restaurant Adele was fighting off a headache. Mark and Bob MacPherson were waiting for them in the bar, but they'd had time for an extra drink, so Mark wasn't too angry. Adele accepted the ritual kiss from Bob, who smelled of whiskey and cigarette smoke, and she was reminded to be grateful that Mark always smelled wonderful. She watched Mark kiss his partner's wife on the mouth and wondered why he got such a kick out of flirting with a fifty-year-old woman, even one as attractive as Gail. The maitre d' called their name and they went in to dinner.

"I think this evening calls for champagne, don't you?" said Bob rather louder than Adele would have wished.

"Adele, you look lovely this evening," said Gail. "Doesn't she look pretty, Bob? I love what you've done with your hair."

"I really need to wash it," said Adele. She immediately regretted her remark. She should have accepted the compliment graciously.

ly without regard for truth or Gail's transparent attempts at friendliness.

The champagne arrived and Bob proposed a toast. Adele could feel herself blush as the diners at nearby tables turned to see what was going on. Gail beamed as she raised her glass and winked conspiratorily at Mark. At last the commotion died down and they began to eat.

Adele had never been to this restaurant before. She was mostly aware of pale wood, sparkling mirrors and glasses hanging from a rack over the bar, and masses of ferns. There was thick carpeting on the floor that muffled sound and created a feeling of intimacy. She noticed that the other customers were very well dressed, many of the women, like Gail, wearing expensive leather boots and silk blouses. She began to feel that even with lipstick and mascara she looked pale compared to them. What did these elegant creatures do with their lives, she wondered. They were like sleek, pampered cats good only for stretching out on white leather couches.

After drinking two glasses of champagne, Adele felt dazed and her head hurt. It became difficult to pretend she was having a good time. She felt pale and listless and she avoided looking at Mark, who managed to smile at Gail and produce bursts of small talk but kept flicking his eyes away from Adele. It's my birthday, she thought, and the only one who's done anything for me today is me. She thought longingly of the empty room at the top of her house and saw in her mind's eye the string dangling from the hatchway to the attic and the shadowed space that waited in silence for her.

"You look a million miles away," said Bob. He laid his beefy hand on her arm and filled her glass with wine. "C'mon, drink up. This party's for you."

Adele showed Mark the studio when it was all finished. The walls were white, and she'd even managed to paint the low ceiling. Half a dozen plants flourished in front of the small window, and her easel stood off to the side so she could look out as she painted. After the first tour, Mark never intruded. There was some slight difficulty involved in pulling down the stairs and climbing into the attic; it required a definite decision to enter it, and it was only Millie who found delight in negotiating the stairs and sitting like an Indian in front of the window where she could watch black squirrels running up and down the trunks of the trees outside.

The studio was cold in winter and Adele had to wear heavy sweaters and even gloves to paint, but the challenge of keeping warm only heightened her affection for the room. It seemed to demand something of her and in answering that demand she had to reach deep inside herself.

For several weeks she made sketches, mostly of Millie sitting by the window or the reckless squirrels that scampered along ice-encrusted branches. None of these satisfied her, and she finally gave up the struggle to create exact likenesses. Then one day, looking absently out the window, she saw a small dog flash through the neighbor's yard. Sketching from the memory of this momentary vision, she produced something that looked more like a fox than a dog but that nevertheless pleased her. Next she drew a whole family of foxes. It passed through her mind to color in this pen and ink drawing with a reddish-brown wash and fill in the background with bushes and trees, but almost immediately she rejected that idea. These were no conventional foxes; they seemed to her mythic animals.

She began with the palest pink, so watery it seemed to stain the paper rather than paint over it. In places the color ran outside the incisive lines she had drawn, producing a kind of aura that counteracted the crisp outlines of the figures. Next she touched

the tips of the foxes' noses with blue and, liking the effect, did more blue on their paws and beneath their tails. The effect startling but not at all unpleasant. She continued building up washes of color: yellow, pale orange, green. When she had finished, she looked at a picture that seemed like a strange combination of Helen Frankenthaler and a Ben Shahn. The expressions of the foxes' faces were gentle but icy, while the color that swarmed them was like an atmospheric whisper.

"What do you think of this, Millie?" asked Adele, laying down her brush.

"Will you make one for me?" said the child.

Before long there were drawings of foxes tacked up everywhere. Some were line drawings of foxes against a backdrop of others showed individual animals peering with burning eyes from delicately detailed lairs. There was a certain crudeness to all the pictures—Adele hadn't painted since before Millie was and her technique was far from polished—but there was a restraint about them that built up a momentum of its own. When she took some downstairs and showed them to Mark, he professed himself pleased.

"I wouldn't exactly call them beautiful," he said, "but they're certainly original. What do you call them?"

"I don't call them anything."

"What will you do with them?"

"I hadn't thought about that."

"Well, you should. You should try to sell them or something. Otherwise what's the point?"

"I don't think I'm good enough yet."

"Why don't you show them to somebody?"

"I'm showing them to you."

"But I don't know anything about art. I mean a professional."

"You do like them?"

"Yes. But I'm no expert."

Adele sat down and put her elbows between her knees. She looked at her drawings and seemed to see them dwindle before her. The foxes that had looked conspiratorial and cunning in their warren-like attic room now seemed to shrink into themselves, to pull away from her.

"Listen, you've worked hard. You deserve a lot of credit for this."

That was a feeble thing to say, thought Adele. She didn't need congratulations for good intentions; she wanted to accomplish something. She rose and gathered her little dream animals up under her arm and returned them to the room at the top of the house. Over and over in her mind she repeated Mark's comment: I wouldn't call them beautiful. She had so wanted them to be beautiful. She lined the drawings up along the floor and studied them. Could she really have done all these? It was like looking at Millie and wondering where on earth she could possibly have come from. These gifts came through her, but their source seemed far outside herself. Perhaps, she thought, she should congratulate herself with knowing that.

By April the snow had nearly all melted away. It was still cold enough for boots and coats, but the air had softened and it smelt of wet earth. There were hundreds of foxes now, and Adele's studio was filled with her drawings of them. She always worked on paper, never canvas, but the drawings themselves had undergone several changes since her first experiments during the winter. Her renderings of the foxes had become less realistic, through their pointed ears, ear-tips, tail-ends, and paws—were still recognizable. Most of the focus of the drawings had shifted to the atmospheric conditions surrounding the suggested animals. Her drawings were much more about weather and the sly creatures that seemed to play on nimble feet beneath waves of mountainous clouds. Her com-

darker too, moving into purples and grays. The accidental y that had marked her earlier work had been replaced by hing closer to serendipity. There seemed to be a balance bet- control and discovery.

le?" here," called Adele from the kitchen. This time she hadn't tten the MacPhersons were coming for dinner. The roast was oven, the potatoes were boiling on the stove, and she was to meet her guests in a neat pair of slacks and a soft mohair er. Over drinks in the living room the conversation turned r painting.

ark tells us you've been painting up a storm," said Gail. "How do you find the time?"

s a question of priorities really," said Adele.

ell, I think it's wonderful. Don't you, Bob?"

hat do you do it for?" asked Bob. "I mean, what do you get f it? I always wondered what makes an artist tick."

m not aware of myself ticking, and I don't know if I can claim an artist, but I do enjoy my work, I admit."

hat's no answer. I believe you're being coy," said Bob. "When e get to see some of this artistry you've lavished so much time

ark says you've practically put down roots in that studio of s," said Gail.

dele will show it to you after dinner," said Mark.

was a simple remark, but it caught Adele by surprise. Without ng given it a thought before, she was suddenly aware that she no intention of letting the MacPhersons into her room. It would ke an invasion of her most private feelings to have them pok-around among her things.

d be glad to show you some of my drawings. But it'd be a whole asier if I brought them down here."

hey want to see what you've done with the attic," said Mark. e transformation's quite remarkable. We'll have to put her in se Beautiful," he said, turning to Gail.

d really like to see it," said Gail. "Wouldn't you, Bob?"

rhaps they'd forget about it during dinner, thought Adele. She fully avoided any discussion of art and tried to keep everybody e table for as long as she could. She had fixed sauerbraten, hed potatoes, and red cabbage with sausage. It was a spicy, er heavy dinner, and everyone seemed content to relax after- ds with a sniffer of brandy. It was getting late, and Adele began pe that the idea of visiting her studio had been quietly forgot- when Mark slapped his hand down on the table and said, "Are eady for the tour?"

es, of course," said Gail. "We're dying to see what Adele's up to."

was awkward climbing up the stairway, especially since Gail wearing a skirt. She was halfway up when she decided to let men go first, and there was a lot of laughing and teasing among n. Adele flipped a switch and merciless light flooded the room. window was like an ebony mirror containing no hint of the y beyond. The effect was to make the room feel encapsulated small.

Why, Adele, I had no idea," gasped Gail. She looked in amaze- nt at the dozens of drawings of foxes Adele had tacked up around room. "I feel like I'm about to be attacked," she giggled. They're beautiful," said Bob.

Thank you," said Adele. Now, let's just get out of here, she ught.

I don't know what they're supposed to mean, but I like them," tinned Bob. "You've done so many."

"Yes."

"I'm really proud of her," said Mark.

"And so you should be," said Gail. She looked puzzled and slightly confused, and it was clear to Adele that she was making an effort to appear interested.

It was dreadful to be able to do nothing but stand by while these people drifted around her room and shuffled through stacks of drawings. She felt helpless and embarrassed.

"Now what were you trying to do here?" asked Gail, holding up one of the early drawings of a mother fox and her two kits.

"Oh, I don't know. Artists aren't supposed to have to talk about their work, are they?"

"I was just interested," said Gail petulantly.

"Why don't you take that one," said Mark.

"How nice," said Gail. "Thank you so much." She remembered after a moment's hesitation to include Adele in her gratitude.

"How could you? How dare you?" said Adele furiously. The MacPhersons were barely out the door before she turned on Mark.

"How could I what?"

"It was bad enough taking them up there without asking me first. But then to give them one of my drawings. How could you have known whether or not I wanted to keep it? You just don't think."

"Be quiet or you'll wake Millie. Besides, what's the big deal? One drawing. You've got hundreds."

"But they're mine. They're not yours to give away. How would you feel if I gave someone your golf clubs?"

"That's not the same thing."

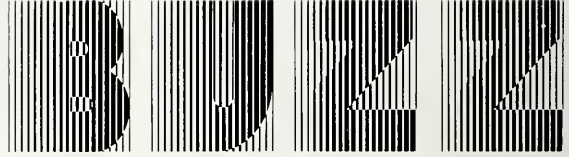
"Why not?"

"You're blowing this all out of proportion. Calm down. You're acting like a child." He paused for a moment, then said spitefully, "An infant!"

"Sometimes," said Adele coolly as she could, "sometimes I hate you."

She didn't wait for him to reply, but went quickly up the stairs to the landing. She pulled hard on the string that attached to her stairway and lowered it awkwardly to the floor. Once she had climbed into her room, she dug out some of the rope that she had piled in a corner months ago, scrambled down the stairs, and tied one end around the bottom step. With only a little difficulty she was able to pull the stairs up behind her, and after she had tied the other end of the rope around one of the beams in the ceiling Mark would be unable to get to her.

Everything was just as it had been before this evening. The stillness in the room was complete. The plants were green and thick, the walls white and shadowless in the artificial light. From every wall her foxes gazed at her with undisturbed expressions, and on her easel was a blank sheet of paper waiting for her to begin. She turned out the lights, and the window that had seemed opaque and impenetrable let in a softer light from outside. Adele sat down on the floor and looked out at the lawn that sloped gently down to the street. She watched a dog nosing quietly around some garbage cans that had been set out at the edge of the sidewalk. It was her normal, familiar neighborhood, where tomorrow Millie would play, children would roar by on bicycles, and mothers would push babies in strollers. But now it was made mysterious by the night. Familiar daytime contours took on strange shapes that seemed to correspond to the shapes in her drawings. She thought about her foxes, and as she sat on the floor looking out the window, she could feel them breathing behind her with quick little panting sounds so soft she could scarcely hear them. She knew that if she turned around she would see their hot golden eyes glinting at her from the darkness and she smiled, knowing they were smiling with her. •



Buzz placed the small ficus bush in a new orange plastic pot and thought it a crime that someone had thrown it away. He thought of the blender he had thrown away simply because A.J. had given it to him. He couldn't imagine getting a blender as a gift, and for Valentine's day nonetheless. She had no idea how to treat a guy. She grew up in a house full of women, but she should have known better. Their dog was female, too, he thought.

The only thing he could feel was the dirt he packed around the plant's base; he noticed the strong odor that rose from the dark soil. It was an amazingly clean smell. It brought him the sense of being in touch with something larger than himself.

The quaint woman who lived in the building had seen him as he first pulled the plant out of the trash. She stared for a long time. He stared back at her flowered housedress and greasy grey hair. He pulled the plant, as well as a box of old Time magazines and a lampshade with one bird dropping on it, from behind the bin. Bird turns industrial designer, he thought as he held the stain up to the light of a flex lamp. He flipped through the old magazines and suddenly felt the walls closing in. "Do you have a fear that someone will do you bodily harm?" Time's survey of the eighties. After reading the survey, he did feel paranoid. The feel of the plant and soil put him in touch with the real and the physical and took the fear of the intangible away.

He couldn't help thinking about A.J. Would life without her be real? Did she wish him bodily harm? She wanted him to be happy. Hadn't she said as much when they ran into each other at Kroger's. What a dumb thing to say, "I want the best for you," all that garbage, like they had never meant anything to each other to begin with. It made him sad and uncomfortable. Her perfect smile and permed hair—she handed him the number to her new office phone. Then she kissed him lightly on the cheek, the way women kiss each other. She was assistant branch manager of the best little bank in the neighborhood. He still worked at the most exclusive restaurant in the area. Georgio's was red and black inside; it was dark and ornate. Buzz liked it very much. Mood dining.

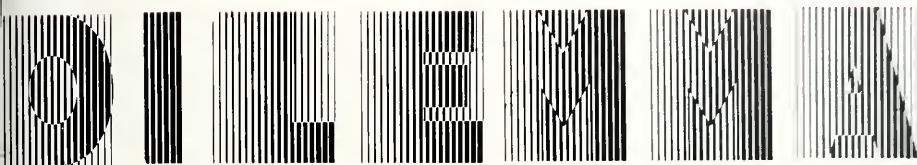
She had moved from her little cubicle to her new office with pic-

tures of him and her little neices stuffed into the crevices of teeth always looked plastic when he smiled. They were not str but he thought they revealed character. She had always tol that her success was his as well, but he didn't want to get dr along. The talk of marriage was so constant it was almost as had planned their lives like she planned their dates. She w organizer, he was not to be manipulated. Why all the push f vancement? Life seemed to draw its own course for things an In time they would all be reduced to the forces of gravit couldn't control that, the largest factor of his life.

Still A.J. had a new office and he had a men's room at wo store an extra pair of practical shoes. The bad taste in his r was replaced by the soil particles in the air. He sat on the floor with the lights out. He let the summer evening settle in skin. Only the glow of the green lunar stereo lights reminde of life outside his room. He sat Indian style and meditated thought of everthing and of nothing, one deep breath and one exhalation. He heard a cat meow and find its way lightly int apartment through the small flap he installed in May.

He opened his eyes to find the place darker than before; his adjusted and he made his way to the bedroom while tripping a pile of dirty clothes. He had pushed them in front of the way, hoping it would force him to do three weeks worth of dry. He fell carefully on the bed; he didn't feel the need to re his T-shirt or his YMCA shorts.

In the morning, the room remained dark. The early Ame dresser, a dark blob against the light-filled blinds, took the ou of an intruder. He focused and it seemed to emit rays of light r than reflect them. Sam the cat sat on his head and made no e for his tail which waved over the landscape of Buzz' chest. threw the covers back and placed his feet on the floor. Sam reed on the pillow. He picked up a T-shirt that was laying nea bed. It was one of A.J.'s baggy ones. He smelled the under carefully and detected her baby powder. For a moment he tho he smelled Shoe Goo, but...nah. He changed his shirt and wand into the kitchen knowing he hadn't shopped in two weeks. Some



Julia Bauchner

Expected food to be there, it was the kitchen after all. He put the heel of the bread on his regulation slice of white. Not such a tight fit, but it held the peanut butter and what was left of the jelly. He headed into the living room, and turned on the TV and found Donahue. He ate his sandwich slowly and wished there had been more jelly in the bottom of the jar. Buzz wiped up a gob of peanut butter and watched a man on Donahue tell the audience he had been a woman in three previous lifetimes. He sat close to the set on a small footstool and twisted the dial to get a better picture but it wouldn't work. He balanced the sandwich and turned the dial; the phone rang.

"Hello, Buzz. Is A.J. there?" She had a high clear voice. "No, Mrs. Pelts," he heard himself say. "I'm not sure where she is. Do you have her new office number?"

"She hasn't gone to work yet. I just called there. Do you know where she went?" She sounded exasperated.

"No, ma'am, sorry. Wish I could be more help."

"Well, just tell her I called, dear, when you see her later. Bye."

"But I don't think I'll be..."

"Click."

He hung up the phone and thought about A.J. He never thought he would be with someone else so quickly. He sat on the footstool and tried to imagine what type of guy she would be with. He wanted to be with a short funky guy with polyester disco pants and a gold ring. But he wasn't sure that she hadn't picked a guy like that. Sorta tall, sorta skinny, sorta bright, but not really the textbook type. She had always told him his big nose made him appear intellectual, but he insisted it's what made him oversexed. He was pretty embarrassed by it. He thought it looked too ethnic, a quality which left too many questions for an adopted kid. He told people he was Italian, because customers invariably asked him. He laughed when he said it was a typical Roman nose. His parents were Catholic but they were southern Catholic, if that could be possible. They never stressed any ethnic background. Buzz had developed a picture of himself and his nose on the embossed coins

of ancient Rome. He pictured A.J. in bed with nothing but a large nose and it made him laugh at his own silliness.

That evening he worked at Georgio's. They were busy and one table blended into the other. No trouble. He was careful about his timing because that was where the money was. He timed the delivery of the water glasses and the time it took the kitchen to produce pasta and filet mignon. He was a fanatic about saving his tips and counting everything in his pockets every hour. He always had his hands in his pockets. He kept written records at home: hours worked, number of dollars and tips that were on the charges. Those would be the only ones he claimed. Often he figured the amount over minimum that he earned each day. It amazed him the amount his pay differed, for the same job, sometimes a fifty dollar difference. About halfway through the evening, he thought he saw A.J. at the small table in the corner. It was a table under a large hanging fern. He stared at the woman for five minutes before he realized it wasn't her. He wanted to apologize, but felt he would make an even bigger fool of himself.

The next few days he worked four double shifts, which made his apartment seem unfamiliar. He liked the feeling that there weren't empty hours in his day. If someone were missing from his life, he would not be around the house to mourn her loss. He saw his apartment as a one-bedroom cube where dirty clothes mushroomed on chairs. He would not admit that he missed her or that he was lonely. Aside from frequent trips to Little General for cat food and his trips to deposit his daily tips (he was going to Europe when he got enough money), he worked and came home a lot.

One afternoon, he emerged long enough to take out a bag of garbage. The bag had taken on a funny shape, a wet bottom, and a smell. He carried it slowly to the green metal square that dominated the back parking lot. He wondered if anyone would notice the gross garbage bag. He tossed the bag in the air towards the opening at the top. He noticed there were boxes surrounding the green thing. He checked for people and then moved in for the kill. Once behind the dumpster, he noticed a young woman sitting next to the boxes on the ground. She sat Indian style and looked through a box of

Penthouse magazines as if she were at a garage sale or something. She had light frizzed hair and a small necklace with little shells on it. She looked up and stared directly at him.

"Hi," she said without looking away.

He stood there and shifted his feet.

"Hi," he managed and put on his best smile. "Come here often?" Look at that bravado. When he looked down, he could see the part on the top of her head. She seemed embarrassed for a moment.

She said suddenly, "This is a great place to spend your free time. It is so real and unspoiled—if you'll excuse the pun." She laughed at her own joke and Buzz joined her a moment later.

"Robert Glover," he put his hand forward. "Glover, like in clover. My friends call me Buzz." Stupid, he thought, my father would have said something like that. His hands felt moist and he wondered about his fingernails, there might be dirt left under them. She stood there smiling at him; another set of perfect teeth, he thought.

"My name is Lou Bowden," she volunteered. "My friends call me Lou." Her voice was deep and rich. Her skin was light and slightly freckled. She had an upturned nose and penetrating blue eyes.

"Does it stand for something?" he asked, hoping it wasn't Louise or BettyLou.

"It used to, but not anymore," she said calmly and smiled again. He uncontrollably smiled back. It seemed very natural.

"Sounds like a serious change," he said teasing.

"It's not. My parents picked the name for me. I just got to delete part of it. I refused to go through my life being called Lounette." He tried desperately to stop laughing, but couldn't. "Go ahead, everyone does. I even get my mail that way."

"I like the name Lou," he said. "A good name, like Dad would have."

"John Wayne's name was Marion," she replied defiantly.

"What's in a name after all." He shrugged and walked toward the apartment building.

"Would you like to join me for tea, Buzz?" she said out of nowhere.

"I would if it were a beer," he laughed. "My treat."

"O.K. Do you have a favorite place or...?"

They went to the Bull Pen for a beer. They drank and laughed and said outrageous things. When seven o'clock rolled around, she wanted to leave; she had things to do and she was a seamstress on the early morning shift. He wanted to kiss her goodnight, but could not bring himself to do it. She was sparkly and talked so fast that he was afraid he would miss something. When he thought about getting close to her he would look off and she could tell he was not thinking about the way modern man substitutes cigarettes for sex. He would stare and she would nudge him till he smiled blearily through the beer—it all fit so nicely.

"Let's do this every night!" he blurted out as she started walking away from the car. He didn't want to scare her, but he couldn't have her leave; she was like a stray animal—one which may stay or may find a home elsewhere. You know because at a certain time of night they will run to the door to be let out. He did not want to let her out.

"I'm too young to go steady," she hollered back at him. He couldn't see her face very well, but her voice was smiling.

"I don't want to go steady," he admitted. "I just want your body." Things were too close to being true. They laughed again. "Why didn't you say so?" she said with childlike simplicity.

"I was trying not to overpower you with my manliness." He was making a mock strong man pose; he started walking towards her in this pose. He wanted to see her reaction. They were in the back parking lot and the smell of the dumpster was drifting towards him. She must live on the second floor; she was halfway up the steps

when he caught up to her. He followed her to her apartment.

"Why don't you come on in, you're already here," she said.

"Keep insulting me and I will," he replied.

Her apartment was square like his. She had a poster of the New Yorker on the wall, large spider plants everywhere, and a wicker rocker: the kind that used to be expensive, but now they're in grocery store. She had a pair of wooden shoes by the door—they were white. He stood in the living room while she went into kitchen. He smelled kitty litter. She looked like a cat-person dependent. There was a copy of Vegetarian Times and Mo Jones on her natural wood coffee table. He sat on her sofa which was covered by a heavy textured material. It might have been rug. The floor reflected a warm brown color. The house smelled of garlic even though he knew she wasn't cooking, or was she? flipped through the magazines without really looking at them, scraped the underside of his nails with the house keys from pocket. In a minute she returned with two mugs of blood red tea.

"Well, this is it. Red Zinger tea. Good for what ails you." She slid close to him. She seemed to know what to do to make him right.

"Thanks," he said, trying to sound very sincere.

"All I've got is Sweet-n-Low. I'm sorry." Buzz could not help thinking about kissing her. It would have been easy from where he was sitting. He didn't know where he wanted to look first—her eyes or in her bedroom. The door seemed painfully visible. He wanted to go in there and blend into her life without asking anything else from her. He wanted it to be like they had known each other a long time. He hoped walking through that door would be as easy as calling her on the phone. Instead of doing anything he watched her open a little pink packet and drop the white dust into the placid tea. They were quiet; he looked at her openly. She returned the stare. She kissed him.

"You're very nice. Thank you," he fumbled. He felt his cheeks get warm.

"You're welcome. I think you're nice," she smiled, and as if they were looking into a very bright light, he looked down.

"I've got some Liebfraumilch in the fridge. Want to help me find it off?" She got up suddenly as if she were embarrassed. He watched the way her jeans fit and the way her hair bounced as she walked. The evening blended into two bottles of wine and a few slices of American cheese. They drank and talked quietly until they realized the room was beginning to get dark. She lit a small scented candle which seemed very bright. He hated the dark in a strange place. Everything seemed dead and ghoulish. He was embarrassed knowing he would be more comfortable with a night light. He was not afraid—he needed something.

He found out she was raised in Edmonton, a small coastal town. Her parents were from New York and they owned an antique store. She spoke with little or no accent. She was twenty-five. Her face seemed very light and smooth and in the dark like marble, almost unreal. Every time she mentioned work they would wind up thin but continue talking about the poster or movie; they both liked Woody Allen. He remained on her sofa and eventually she went to the bathroom for what seemed like a long time. He put his head on the arm and fell into a deep sleep. So deep that he woke up the next morning at 8:30. It took him several minutes to remember whose apartment he was in. She had left a note next to the small clock she placed on the endtable.

Buzz,

Had a wonderful time last night. You fell asleep and I didn't have the heart to wake you. There's oatmeal in the cupboard and O.J. in the fridge. Go ahead and help

up, looked for clothing, and couldn't find it. He realized it on. He headed into the kitchen to look for breakfast. The dishes from the night before were washed and in the drainer, the floor looked clean and smelled of gas. The drawings on her fridge looked as if a ten-year-old had done them. They were colorful; one said "Jedd loves Lou" and the other was a picture of a house with a porch and a swing set.

He thought nothing else about it. He ate some leftover lasagna, left the dish in the sink. When he opened the door to leave, he saw Sam on the doorstep. The cat walked into her apartment the way he knew the way. His tail was high in the air, the sign for a cat. "You bastard, he thought, keeping her all to yourself. He didn't eat the cat up and placed him on the doormat. He shut the door. The day off, so he waited until five and started calling her. He didn't reach her until two days later.

"Hi, Lou. How have you been?" He tried to be smooth. His hand felt the cord, sending ripples down the line.

"Hi. Glad to be home; a few days with my parents is enough." His voice sounded pleasant.

"Where you gone for a while?" he oozed.

"Yeah, it's my little brother's vacation and I went to get him." "Great, the mall or the movies." "Mr. Complacency, he thought. "Yeah," she said laughing.

"Little kids," he said. "It's been a long time since I've seen one; only one child." Great, now he sounded like his mother. She knits and feels too old to join the YWCA. She used to be in a marching band.

"He's little, but he's not that little." She seemed to choose her words.

"They grow up fast, I bet." What is this, Leave it to Beaver? "You'll have to meet Jedd sometime. This is our week together. Look forward to it all year."

"Let me take you both for pizza; that way I'll meet Jedd and make sure he's falling asleep. I'm really sorry about that."

"That's no problem. You really don't have to do that."

"Want to. Besides, it's my way of saying thanks for the hospitalization. I'll be there at six."

"Yeah, sure." She seemed hesitant.

He took them to his favorite pizza house. It was run by this Italian man and it looked like someone's basement. It had card chairs and tables everywhere, comic book racks, and posters of superheroes on the wall. There was even a clothed monkey on the john—some of those posters where the monkey wears a suit. She opened the door hours so most of the time you had to show up and hope they were open; all her grandchildren worked there. Buzz walked up the steps; he left Lou and Jedd in the car. He looked back and they were already out of the car. Jedd had black hair and pink cheeks. He was nineteen. From across the parking lot his face looked blurry as it would in cold weather. Jedd's mouth was very red; he looked like he had been exercising or crying. He seemed everything he was not. He was tall, dark, and impressively dressed. His tie was ironed. Lou was wearing faded Calvin Kleins and a tank top. She had pulled Jedd to her and she was straightening his tie. He thought if Jedd were not retarded, he would make a good detective.

The winner went smoothly; everyone was quiet. Jedd seemed more interested in Superman than the Phantom or War Story. He looked bored or strained or something. Buzz knew Jedd had a problem but he couldn't help resenting him. It was more that he wished that

as a concept Jedd never existed. He would be staying with Lou, if Jedd were not there. He lost patience with Jedd, but said nothing. It was just a matter of time before he snapped. He wanted Lou to think he was understanding, but he couldn't help wanting to yell.

To break the silence, he asked Jedd about school. But he answered so slowly that he frustrated himself and everyone else. Jedd stuttered.

Buzz did nothing but get more depressed. He wanted to finish Jedd's sentences, he wanted to scream. Somehow all this was supposed to be worked out. Lou watched the Captain Marvel poster above Buzz' head. She had infinite patience with both of them.

At the door of her apartment, she told him simply and plainly that it was Jedd's week, just for him. He wanted to lie and tell her it was his birthday. But he thought it better not to. His birthday was at the end of the summer—that would mean he was a Leo. Hi, I'm a Leo, what's your sign? How dumb.

She reads about being a vegetarian, she even smells like broccoli and garlic. He thinks she is beautiful, and wonders if she saw him that night while he was sleeping. He probably looked very stupid. He guessed being stupid wasn't such a bad thing in her book. Jedd couldn't help the fact he was dropped on his head...or was he burned with...maybe he was adopted. Just given away. You know you get what you pay for. He wondered what his parents had paid for him. As a child, he thought he could be returned, only he wasn't sure where adopted babies were dropped off. That was all such a long time ago, he didn't think all that really mattered now. He couldn't be carrying that with him.

He wondered if retarded people got married and if they ever did it; probably not. He couldn't imagine Jedd doing it.

He fell asleep without feeding Sam, or removing his clothes. He lounged around his house all day until work that evening. There were no waitresses, only waiters and they were all gay. Work could be depressing.

When he went to work the next afternoon, he was informed that there were going to be changes. Because the season was slow, the restaurant was being redecorated. The black and red was to be converted into peach and wicker. They wanted to lighten things considerably. The host, a balding man of thirty-five, threw his hands in the air and complained to anyone who would listen.

Buzz took it well, although he did not like change. He felt that he really had nothing to say. He only thought about Lou and waited for the day Jedd would leave.

He was fond of the chandelier in the foyer and was relieved to find out they were leaving it alone. It symbolized the pictures he had in his mind of what Europe was like. Europe never changed and seemed to him a relative he had never met, the hope of warmth and the expectation of strangeness. Europe seemed too far away and he hoped the next few days would leave him settled and happier. There was Lou who seemed beckoning and he had only met her and he even hated her brother. She seemed to know her place or what to do—she had convictions. She had small cactus plants on her window sill. It all seemed so strange yet very necessary. Since he had known her the need for A.J. was not so pressing and horrible. He hadn't even told her that Sam was his.

The Saturday morning after Jedd left, he knocked on the door of her apartment. He listened to the hollow sound the wood made and the rhythm of his hand on the door. She came to the door wearing only a T-shirt and striped socks.

He did not want the phone to ring while he was there. He didn't want to know there was anyone else in her life. He wanted it to be him, all him again.

ARS POETICA

(After Archibald MacLeish)

Palpable by my hand are you
And mute to my questioning dream.
I touch you with finger and thumb
As I touch a medallion, dumb.
Your words are silent in my throat,
Wont to sing as silent stones sing
While, moss-grown, they line the casement.
How long wordless like flight of birds
Or motionless like climb of moon
Over entangled trees and leaves
That remain of Winter's mem'ry,
Of grief's history, will you be?

Eugene V. Grace

Photography Competition



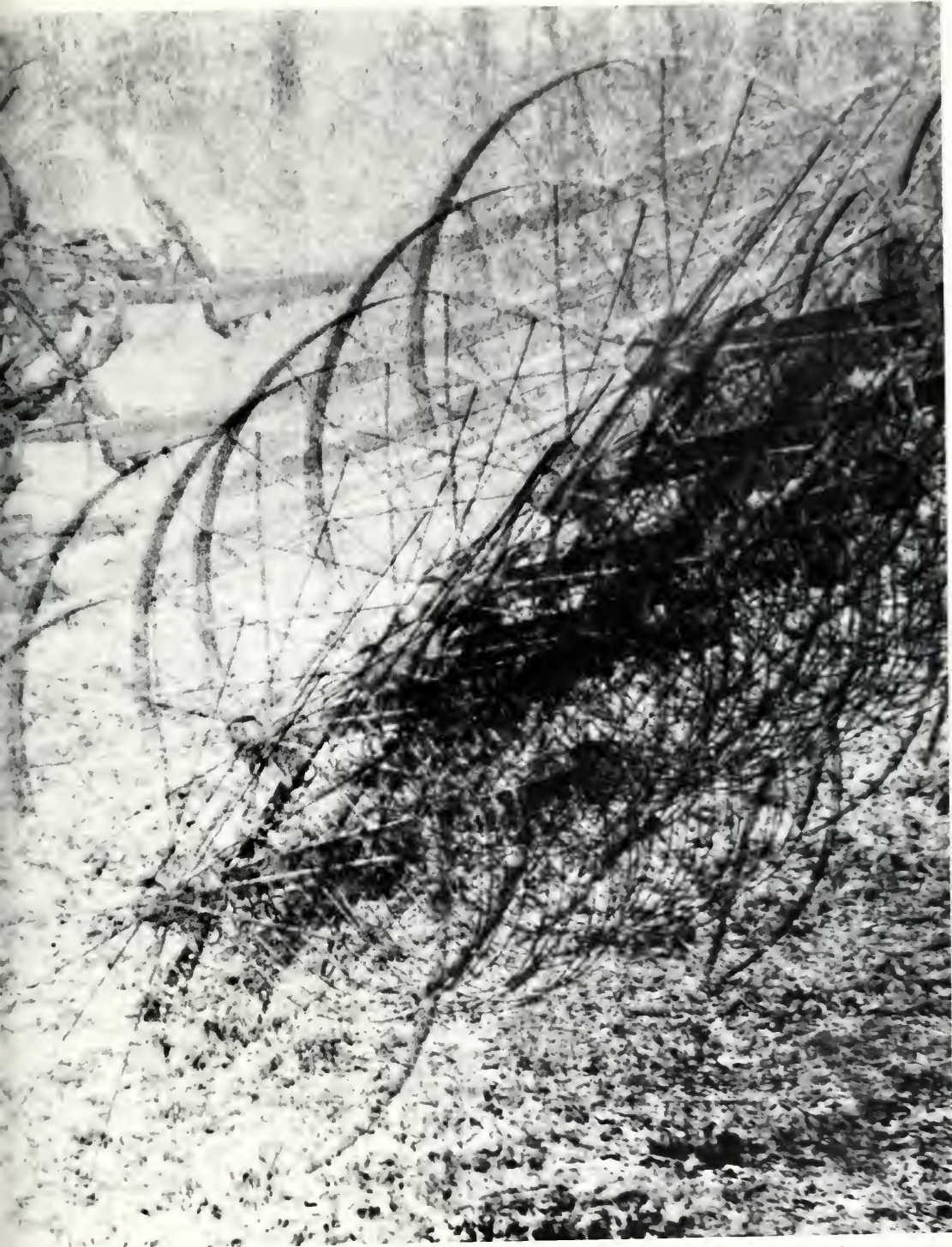
Ghost Town

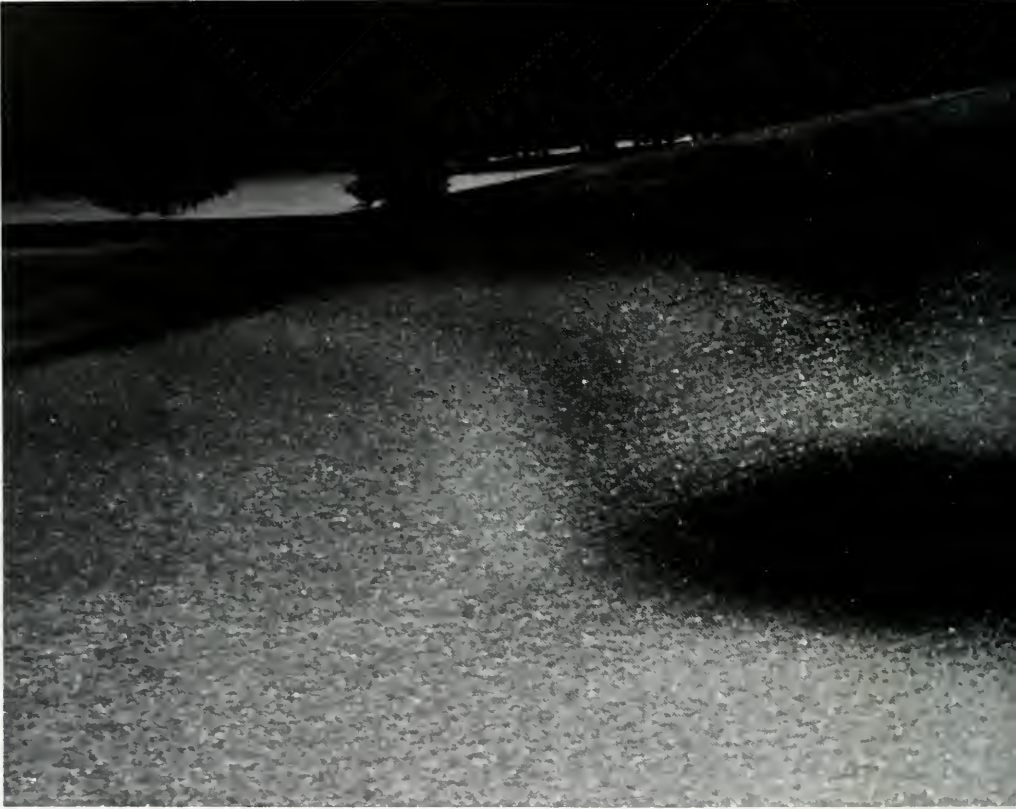
Christopher Hauselman

Third Place



Rebecca B. Sexton





Snow Mound



Inga Floyd-Kear



Pearls for Monkeys

John Ke

Second Place



Fog IV

Inga Floyd-Kear



OK

Ari Soeleiman



Reflections

Elisabeth Price





Dog on the Sand

Christopher Hauselman



Nona's Apartment

Inga Floyd-Kear



Dinner

Christopher Hauselman

Fred Chappell

An Interview by Ian McDowd

*It is one of the ironies of modern American letters that an author who writes of life in the rural or smalltown South is often dismissed as a mere regionalist while the chronicler of yet another privileged existence in the urban or suburban North is welcomed into the True Brotherhood of the New York Literary Establishment. Well, the name Fred Chappell may not carry the weight of Saul Bellow or John Updike when mentioned in the upper echelons of the major publishing houses or the editorial offices of **The New York Review of Books**, but among instructors and students of creative writing and the editors and readers of literary magazines it is spoken of with respect and admiration. Indeed, Chappell's presence on the faculty of the MFA Writing Program here at UNC-Greensboro is one reason for that program's national reputation. Students in similar programs in Arkansas and Wisconsin and Texas and New York and elsewhere know his work and know this university because of him.*

Chappell is the author of four novels: **It Is Time, Lord** (Atheneum, 1963), **The Inkling** (Harcourt, 1965), **Dagon** (Harcourt, 1968), and **The Gaudy Place** (Harcourt, 1973). The most ambitious of these is probably **Dagon**, which was critically neglected in this country but won the **Prix De Meilleur des Lettres Etrangères** in France, where its author has a growing reputation. In the last decade Chappell's energies have turned more towards poetry, most notably in the long narrative poems **River, Bloodfire, Wind Mountain, and Earthsleep**, originally published as separate booklength pieces but gathered together in the volume **Midquest**, published by Louisiana State University Press in 1981. This winter LSU Press published his **Castle Tzingal**. He has not, however, abandoned fiction, for he has two novels and a collection of short stories in the works.

Fred Chappell was born in 1936 in Canton, a small town in the mountains of western North Carolina. He received both a B.A. and M.A. from Duke University, where he specialized in 18th Century English Literature and produced a lengthy Master's thesis on Samuel Johnson. He has been married for a quarter of a century and has one son, a jazz musician in Chicago. Aside from the workshops and tutorials he conducts in the writing of fiction and poetry here at UNC-Greensboro, he teaches a popular course in science fiction and, with Dr. William Tucker, an equally popular one in film.

Despite Chappell's claim that he teaches in order to support his writing, it becomes clear that he regards his time spent in the classroom as much more than mere necessary drudgery. At a time when so many academics and institutions are placing increasing emphasis on research and publication, often at the expense of classroom instruction, Fred Chappell's attitude towards teaching is a refreshing one indeed.

After this interview was completed, it was announced that Fred Chappell had received the Bollingen Prize in poetry from Yale University Library.



Coraddi: Do you ever feel that the label "southern writer" is a restrictive one?

Pepell: No, not in the way people generally mean the question. It is a way in which it is slightly restrictive, but in a good way. There has been, ever since the beginning of this century, an enormous literary tradition in the South. You can do anything with it, so it's not restrictive in that sense, but you do have the weight of it. There's no way I can help but see my work coming down in a direct line, not from Faulkner, who's meant that much to me, but from certain other Southern writers: Allen Tate, Peter Taylor, John Crowe Ransom, etc.

And large, though, I generally tend to think of myself as an Appalachian writer rather than simply a southern one, for when I say "South" people tend to think "Deep South" and I'm not part of that tradition at all. In my formative years I had no experience with racial minorities, as there were almost none in the area I came from, no large land holdings, no plantations ...

Coraddi: Not part of the Agrarian tradition, in other words.

Pepell: No, not really. But since Appalachia is such a little island surrounded by the South, it's a tradition I and other Appalachian writers cling to. The Appalachian literary tradition simply isn't strong enough to support a writer on its own; there are less than a dozen important Appalachian writers, Thomas Wolfe being the most prominent.

Coraddi: I never thought of him as being anything beyond regionally Southern.

Pepell: No, he distinctly Appalachian. If you know Asheville, North Carolina, you'll never see him as being anything else.

Coraddi: What was your first published work?

Pepell: The first I'd care to acknowledge was a short story I wrote while in college, that was published in the Duke literary magazine. I've forgotten the title of it now, but it was a "serious" story, the first such I'd tried to write. I'd written a lot of bad science fiction and other stuff when I was young, but I never really had any sort of knack. When I tried to deal with more personal and "serious" themes I was more successful. So I consider the published story my first real work. I had a lot of help in those days - the editor of the magazine was Reynolds Price, and he went over all my stuff in me.

Coraddi: Do you consider him to have been any sort of mentor or to have had major influence on your work?

Pepell: I suppose he was a sort of mentor, as friends often are in your begin writing. Obviously, he had a particular power as a mentor, as he could choose whether or not to print my stuff and could ask me to rewrite it. But other than that, no. I don't think he had any direct influence on my work. We were from very different kinds of backgrounds and had very different kinds of experience to draw on.

Coraddi: Of the writers you did name as possible influences, or past predecessors in your tradition, Peter Taylor was the one most struck by. He is the first one that would have occurred to me after reading your work, though I can't say why.

Pepell: That's true. Peter has had a very definite influence on my writing, though I'm surprised it's noticeable. Peter has a kind of complacency about his work, a kind of cultural resource, that I lack. I don't really have his mastery. He can really write traditional Henry James *story*. There aren't that many people who can. Oh, it seems easy; people now do all sorts of experiments, but they get away from a tradition they've written through and grown. But that's not true. It may not be in fashion at the moment, but the people who have *tried* to write the traditional kind of story have not outgrown it. It's just as hard to write as the strangest kind of experimental razzmatazz you can imagine.

Coraddi: You consider yourself to be a traditionalist, then.

Pepell: No, not really. Well, yes. Let's say yes and no. When the theme and subject matter come to me that seem to require it I prefer a traditional approach to twisting the material into some kind of experimental shape. On the other hand, there are ideas and themes that come to you for which a traditional shape simply isn't

possible, so you have to try something different.

Coraddi: Did you have your first major success with poetry or fiction?

Chappell: Fiction. It was accidental. Most of my career has been accidental - I haven't attempted to "shape" a literary career in any way. I had an opportunity to write a novel. Someone asked me if I had one I could submit. So, after some hesitation, for I'd been thinking of myself as a poet, I took the chance and wrote it.

Coraddi: And that was *It Is Time, Lord*?

Chappell: Right. It was published in 1964. I'll tell a little bit of the story simply because there might be young readers out there who want to write and who might benefit from seeing how such things come about. I was still at Duke where, just as they do here at UNC-G, they would occasionally have visiting writers come and do workshops with the students. In this case they got a novelist who was also an editor. His name was Hiram Hayden and he worked for the then newly-formed publishing house Atheneum. Well, he liked a one-page sketch I'd written; it hung in his mind after he left, and he wrote back later and asked if I'd be interested in writing a novel. After hesitating a little bit, I said I'd try, and I wrote half the novel and sent it to him and he sent me \$250 and I finished it. The whole process took a period of about six weeks.

Coraddi: Could it happen that way now?

Chappell: I don't think so. It's much tougher to sell a first novel now. On the other hand, that's about the way it *might* happen - that is, an editor would recognize your name from seeing you or meeting you in some situation and so your name wouldn't be strange to him; the manuscript wouldn't just come in cold over the transom. But whether or not he would be able to go ahead and offer you an advance for an unfinished novel, well, that's highly unlikely. Still, he would read it with some sympathy and knowledge of what you were aiming at, and that's important. It's hard to make these contacts, and college is one place where you can do it.

Coraddi: Speaking of that, what is your opinion of the academic literary scene?

Chappell: That's another thing that, like so many things in the modern world, has taken shape by accident. Specifically, because of the baby boom after the Second World War. Artists, writers included, have always had to do something else, some other job by which they support their art. There's nothing new in this: Homer begged, Villon stole, Balzac borrowed. That's how it works.

Most people I know have jobs in order to support their golf games or to buy a second car, to support their boating hobbies, that sort of thing. They don't work a job for its own sake. And so an artist teaches in order to support his art.

That doesn't mean he's doing a worse job than his colleagues. It simply means that he doesn't tend to make the teaching his absolutely primary concern. For most artists, their day is over by the time everyone else's begins. At nine in the morning, my writing day is over and my teaching day has begun. It's just a matter of having two jobs, that's all.

Coraddi: Yet they're intertwined, in a way.

Chappell: Oh yes, of course. That is, I teach writing. I teach literature, and I don't find that teaching writing has been detrimental to my work, because I've learned so much from my students. After all, you end up constantly thinking about writing, simply because you teach it, in one form or another, all day long.

Coraddi: But you don't just teach writing classes, you teach certain literature courses as well.

Chappell: I teach science fiction and I teach, with Bill Tucker, the English department's film course, and that's great too. You see, I get to pick and choose in dealing with those subjects, because there is not, at this point, a hard and fast canon. When you're teaching, say, American Literature, the you have to teach *Huckleberry Finn* and you have to teach Emerson and whatever. This way I have more freedom, though in a sense there's more work, too - in any course with a changing canon you have to do a lot of research, you have to be constantly keeping up. But that's why I like it - it's exciting.

Coraddi: What led to your interest in those two disciplines, science fiction and film?

Chappell: In both cases I was simply a serious "fan" of the subjects and was very interested in them. I was a science fiction fan for years - I could never divorce my interest in writing from my first interest in science fiction. They're really inextricably intertwined, because where I grew up in the mountains, the only writing I came across that seemed worth reading was science fiction. Of all the things that were popular, new, and available right on the newsstand, it was the only kind of writing that seemed to have merit. Such feelings passed away to a certain extent, as they do with any first love, but my interest has remained abiding and fairly faithful.

So when the opportunity arose and the person who used to teach science fiction here at UNC-G left, there was an opening, and as it had a good enrollment traditionally, it was open for me to teach.

Coraddi: Were you actually involved in organized science fiction fandom as a young man?

Chappell: Oh, Lord, yes. I wrote for fanzines; I wrote for *Skyhook*, for Robert Silverberg's *Spaceship*, for Harlan Ellison's *New Dimensions*, far more than I can remember now.

Coraddi: What experience have you had with film?

Chappell: I'd done some work here and there - some script doctoring, some TV writing - just junk, mostly, nothing really sustained. I seldom had any official credits - when friends were working on something I'd just jump in and write a page or two.

Coraddi: You mentioned TV. You don't have anything comparable to, say, Joseph Heller's *McHale's Navy* episode?

Chappell: I'm afraid not, though I have contributed to situation comedies. A lot of people don't realize that those kind of programs traditionally take short stories, actual, well-known short stories, and change them beyond recognition. But they would still pay the original writers, or even hire those writers to do what were called "first adaptations." I did a couple of those. I don't know if they still do that sort of thing now.

Coraddi: I think they just tend to plagiarize these days.

Chappell: Well, I hope that somebody sues their ass off when they do. It's a medium that's long on bullshit and short on basic dramatic ideas.

Coraddi: Let's change gears and talk more about your serious writing. Which of your books are you really satisfied with?

Chappell: I'm not really satisfied with any of them, but I do have favorite children, as every writer does. I tend to favor my second novel, *The Inklings*, because it's kind of neatly done and because the intentions are hidden; it's kind of a secret novel in a way, one nobody ever bothered or should bother to figure out.

I suppose that if I had to choose from among my favorites, I would choose the long poem, *Midquest*, simply because it took so long and it was such a novelty when it came out; four narrative poems, all strung together into a whole kind of structure. Now, that's become fashionable again, and all kinds of people are writing narrative poems, but when I started the work in 1971 nobody was doing it. They were all writing interior lyrics.

So I'm kind of pleased with myself for persevering in such an unfashionable mode.

Coraddi: Is there anything you'd like to say about your newest book of poetry, *Castle Tzingal*?

Chappell: Well, it's not a book I chose to write. It's one, like *The Inklings* that for some reason seemed to have been "given" to me. That is, I woke up with almost the entire first poem complete in my head, along with the knowledge that it was the first of a sequence of poems and the knowledge of the basic shape that the sequence would take.

That is something that is very rare. It's only happened to me once or twice. You feel a responsibility to such books you don't feel towards one you "invented" from scratch. You feel that there is a voice speaking to you and you better get it down right, because whatever the consequences are, they won't be pleasant if you don't. If people read *Castle Tzingal*, they might imagine it as I did -

as a series of sung arias; it's a little chamber opera as much as anything.

Coraddi: Neither the book's form nor its subject matter are I would call currently fashionable.

Chappell: As I said, it's a book that was more or less given to me and of course I recognized immediately, as soon as I recognized the form, that I had a supremely unfashionable poem on my hands. Look at it - arias very heavy with rhyme, irregular meters, a vaguely like the form of verse Milton uses in *Samson Agonistes*. The critical reviews aren't in yet, but I don't expect them to be very favorable, because this is a very odd performance.



Coraddi: Well, I can tell you that when students attempt such work in poetry classes the reaction usually isn't favorable. Student poetry is often awful anyway, but in my experience the form itself was being frowned on.

Chappell: It certainly is, and that's a terrible mistake to make me, the term "free verse" should mean just that: the poet should have the freedom to pick and choose any form he likes. If he chooses the wrong one for the subject matter, that's a different story. I think he should be free to choose from among the multiplicity of forms. We have an infinity of forms available now, in a way didn't have thirty or forty years ago. In fact, it seems almost irrelevant - useless baggage - when someone claims to have come up with a new form. Lord knows, we've got enough forms for what we have to say. So much we have trouble finding material, subjects to fill up the forms we've got.

Coraddi: So you wouldn't consider some forms to be outdated?

Chappell: That's a sentiment I've heard many times and often disagree with very strongly. I've heard other teachers of poetry and other poets say "well, blank verse was all right in its day, now we have the jet plane, so there's no need for it." Those arguments are specious. Any form automatically has a new life as soon as someone attempts to attack and control it in a new way. If you threw out blank verse you'd have to throw out Wall Stevens, for God's sake.

Coraddi: Moving on into fiction, I'd like to know if you're working on anything booklength.

Chappell: Glad you asked that. My novel, *I Am One of You Forever*, is out in May, and I'll have another book of short stories out sometime in '86, entitled *Waltzes Noble and Sentimental*.

Coraddi: Anything in particular you'd like to say about the novel?

Chappell: Sure. I want everyone to go out and buy ten copies. (laughter)

Coraddi: Who will be publishing the novel?

Chappell: Louisiana State University Press. They're published six times of my poetry, bless their hearts, though nobody ever makes money off poetry. So I thought that if I were to write a book that just might break even and possibly even earn a little money, I thought they deserved it. So without saying a word to my agent, I gave them the novel. I'm interested in seeing what repercussions will come from that.

Coraddi: Does the book fit into any established genre or category?

Chappell: Absolutely. It falls into the category of "phony novel" - a novel which is really a collection of short stories, all featuring the same characters, that have been cobbled together as a whole.

Coraddi: Right.

Chappell: The great masters of this sort of thing are John Steinbeck's *Fortilla Flat* and *The Pastures of Heaven* and William Faulkner's *The Hamlet*.

Coraddi: It can truly be called a novel, though, for the stories are closely connected. And, really, the novel in such a - well, Henry James called some of them "baggy monsters," and that is a kind of description of a lot of novels. But since so many of the same characters and themes appeared throughout mine, I felt justified in calling it a novel. After all, everyone knows that a novel automatically sells 100 more copies than a collection of short stories. The form just seems to have a legitimacy and authority for modern readers that short stories and poems don't possess.

Coraddi: Do you have any other lengthy projects in the works?

Chappell: Yes. I've been working on a fantasy novel for some time now, but it's only half-finished. It takes place in a kind of imaginary world and is about a fellow who steals shadows and sells them for living. The story, up to this point, is about a young man who's decided he'd like to try this profession, which he finds attractive. After a series of misadventures, he does indeed become an apprentice shadow-thief.

Coraddi: Any particular influences on this? It doesn't sound like a sort of generic fantasy novel that's been too common lately.

Chappell: Not that I can think of, beyond heavy reading in Clark Ashton Smith ...

Coraddi: H.P. Lovecraft's old crony.

Chappell: Yes. And Mervyn Peake. Especially Peake.

Coraddi: Speaking of fantasies, I just read your "Weird Tales," *The Texas Review*. Having grown up reading H.P. Lovecraft, I loved it.

Chappell: Thank you.

Coraddi: The "decline of the short story has been a popular topic in literary circles, perhaps too much so - I now think some of the people who claim to see a "renaissance" in the form are guilty of wishful thinking. They're sick of talking about its decline, so now there's got to be a renaissance, willy-nilly.

Chappell: Well, obviously there has been a decline in the commercial prospects of the short story. Collections don't sell, anthologies don't sell, there are fewer and fewer general interest magazines willing to publish them, etc. All that to one side, I can't think of any time when the short story has been practiced so widely as it is now. More people than ever are writing them, even though fewer people than ever are reading what those writers produce.

The short story has become so expert that it reads almost like foreign language to the general reader. You might want to compare its "decline" to the "decline" of modern music, which more and more people simply refuse to listen to because the discipline has become so specialized.

Coraddi: So, short fiction has become a form for initiates only?

Chappell: Almost, almost. It seems to me that the people who really enjoy reading modern short stories must be the people who either

write short stories or would like to write them. But I don't see anything wrong with that.

Coraddi: Yet there are critics and essayists - Gore Vidal, for instance - who find much of modern fiction, short stories and novels, to be too inbred, too academic, too obviously written by writers and academics for writers and academics.

Chappell: That's viable criticism. He's right to a certain extent. That's one reason, I think, why genre fiction has taken such a hold. And there are always exceptions, a thousand exceptions. There are thousands of easy to read and naturalistic novels that a reader would find just as accessible as anything by Dreiser or Jack London of whomever.

But the point is that it's not as attractive anymore. Many of us look for something more in fiction than just a cut-and-dried naturalism, both as readers and writers.

Coraddi: Something more meta-fictional, perhaps?

Chappell: Yes, but not metafiction itself. However attractive the idea of meta-fiction, it's used by too many people as an excuse for self-indulgence. The good writers who try it, and there are some, are fine, but once you open a kind of area like this, it makes it easy for a lot of people who don't really know what the hell they're doing and don't really care to travel along in the wake and be fashionable. I won't mention any names or badmouth anybody.



Coraddi: I was wondering what you thought of some of the biggies - not just in meta-fiction, but in the newer forms fiction has taken. Calvino, for instance, or Borges.

Chappell: Calvino I've always loved. I've been an avid reader of his since his early stuff came out and kept up with him all the way through *The Baron of the Trees* and that sort of work. His classics, as far as I'm concerned, are *Cosmicomics* and *T-Zero* - the two collections that mark the beginning of the turn in Calvino's work.

Coraddi: What do you think of *If On a Winter's Night a Traveller*?

Chappell: It bored me. I think it was an idea that would have been fine for forty pages, but not for an entire book.

Coraddi: Do you like Borges?

Chappell: I used to love his work, and I still like it, but now I think I'm fed up with everybody else liking it. I liked it in the early six-

ties, but now that everyone else likes it too, I'm beginning to have reservations about it. (Laughter)

Coraddi: I imagine more of us feel that way about certain writers that we would care to admit.

Chappell: I hate to admit it. I was so excited when I first read him. I still have the original *New Directions* editions of his work in English. He seemed to be the first person in a long time to pick up on one whole side of Poe that had been neglected and damn well done something with it. I really appreciated that.



Coraddi: Some years ago, on Dick Cavett, I heard Borges say that he had recently come under the influence of Kipling, particularly *Plain Tales from the Hills*, and that this had inspired him to attempt a plainer style. I haven't seen the results of it in his work, though.

Chappell: Oh, yes, the tenor of his work changed completely. He moved back towards realism, though not the sort of realism he practiced at the beginning of his career. He only wrote a few of those, but simply because he's not writing much fiction anymore.

Coraddi: I don't think I've seen his more recent work, then.

Chappell: I'm glad you mentioned that interview. I saw him interviewed on television by William Buckley, and it was just embarrassing, because Buckley had gone all the way to Argentina yet had obviously never read a word of the man's work - but only been told he was a great force in modern literature. So right off the bat Buckley started saying very sneering things about the Victorian writers like Kipling and Stevenson. (Laughs) He hit the wrong man, the wrong note.



Coraddi: A lot of the South American writers, particularly those of rather more liberal persuasion than Borges, seem to adore Kipling and Stevenson and Chesterson, and even lesser writers of the era. I was intrigued to read the *Playboy* interview with Gabriel Gar-

cia Marquez, where he said he adored Stoker's *Dracula*, a past he'd passed on to Fidel Castro!

Chappell: Borges, of course, is rather reactionary, politically other South Americans don't necessarily like him or his work.

Coraddi: Yes, but across the political spectrum, reactionary radical, there seems to be a consensus about some of the English Victorian and Edwardian novelists. It's as if the South Americans are discovering new insights in those authors that we may have overlooked.

Chappell: Absolutely. They recover parts of our heritage for us. That happens all the time. Borges himself has an essay of this, about how reading a new poet helps us to re-read an old one; how, read, say, Browning now, in a different way, after having read Kafka—how Kafka has “uncovered” Browning for us.

Coraddi: Do you see yourself as working in any tradition or mode that may be uncovered in the future? I know that's a loaded question. It implies your work is somehow “buried” of considered obsolete now.



Chappell: In a way it's true on a number of different fronts. The narrative poem, for example, was consciously reactionary. I know it was reactionary when I began it, yet I was determined to go ahead anyway. But also my novels. In my first three novels I worked consciously in an old Symbolist strategy, as you find in certain French authors - say, Flaubert in *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*.

There's still more life in every form and every kind of writing. The more it seems worn out, the more there may still be in it for us. The poems that seem the most familiar are the poems that are among the most alive if we begin to take them more seriously, see through their over-familiarity. I have a feeling that Longfellow, for instance, may be rediscovered one of these days for what he really is, and the good things about him may be recovered.

Coraddi: This is a stock question, but one that may be valuable in this context. Do you have anything specific to say to students who may be thinking about entering an MFA Writing Program somewhere, who may want to become writers?

Chappell: Well, no one should want to become a writer, they should want to write. And an MFA program is valuable for one thing and one thing only. It gives someone at a certain junction in their life

me to write. That is, if you don't mind starving for a couple
 rs, you have time and the impetus to get the work done. Also,
 ave comrades who are trying to do the same thing. And that's
 you really learn from, in a way - not from the instructor, but
 your fellow students.
 re's always this fear, of course, that people who come out
 iting programs will all end up sounding alike, somehow.
 ddi: That never happens.

**For most artists, their day is
 er by the time everyone else's
 gins. At nine in the morning,
 y writing day is over and my
 aching day has begun. It's just
 matter of having two jobs,
 at's all."**

Chappell: *Never.* I've never seen it. Everybody seems to me to be
 oletely at right angles to everybody else.

Coraddi: God knows, my two years in the MFA program didn't
 e me start writing like anyone else. Or anyone like me. Heaven
 us both if it had!

Chappell: *(Laughs)* That would have been very odd. One thing that
 nk is important, though, is that MFA programs should not
 me specialized. You shouldn't be able to pick a program where
 specialize entirely in commercial writing or one where they
 ialize entirely in noncommercial writing. I think if we lost our
 ents who want to go into commercial fiction, or, contrariwise,
 e lost those who want to just be esthetic poets or whatever,
 e results would be so dessicated and sterile that the pro-
 m would be worthless. You have to have that interaction of dif-
 nt goals in writing as well as of different personalities.



Coraddi: So you don't think someone should be sneered at for wan-
 y to be a "hack" novelist who turns out paperback originals?

Chappell: Absolutely not! If he wanted to be a *crummy* hack
 elist, that's a different story. I don't know what a hack novelist
 at least not in a pejorative sense. Mort Cooper, for instance,
 lously, crummy, "hack" novelist - he's obscure, but he's writ-

ten more novels, probably, than anybody in the United States. A
 good "hack" novelist is John D. MacDonald. He's first rate. He
 knows exactly what he wants to do, he knows how it's supposed
 to come out, and you're very rarely disappointed when you finish
 one of his books. There's as much honor in that as there is in esthetic
 writing.

Coraddi: It hasn't been widely acknowledged, but that kind of
 writing seems almost as much in danger these days as serious
 writing is. In other words, you'll hear "literary" and "academic"
 writers talk about how "real" novels are being squeezed off the
 shelves of the bookstores by stuff like the *Dead Cat Cookbook* and
 self-help manuals and the like. What they don't realize is that the
 "commercial" writers are losing shelf space to that sort of thing,
 too. Oh, there's room for MacDonald and for Stephen King and
 a few others, but *new* writers working in those same commercial
 modes are finding it harder and harder to get their work into the
 stores.

Chappell: Then the booksellers are making a mistake, for the new
 MacDonalds and Kings are going to have to come from somewhere.
 Logically, what should happen, though I don't know if it will, is
 that there will end up being two types of bookstores - the kind that
 sells real books and the kind that sells glassware and greeting cards
 and cat books. You don't go to a "non-book" store for the same
 reason that you go to a bookstore, you really don't. Someday
 somebody will figure that out.



Coraddi: So you don't necessarily think the future is bleak for the
 "real" book?

Chappell: It may be unfair to make generalizations - everywhere
 in every publishing company editors and agents aren't completely
 cut and dried. You have enormous variety, and some of them care
 very deeply about literature. It's a very tough commercial prospect,
 though - they have to make a profit, and it gets tougher and tougher
 to do that in books. And that's not necessarily their fault or the
 fault of the general reader - there are lots of other factors: postage,
 distribution, taxes, and other things we may not know anything
 about. And all these enormous forces militate, at this point, against
 books. But books are as basic to civilization as electricity, and I
 honestly believe that there will always be some way to get them
 out to the reader.

JUST A TRAIN

Jennifer Sault

The train was due to leave at nine-thirty. Leeds Station had been remodelled and was not as ugly as Janet remembered it but still was not a thing of beauty. Nothing much had been done to the platforms; the trains didn't chug any more—the steam engines had given way to sleek, phallic diesels—but they still pulled in under the old high vaulted glass roof. The station buildings were mostly new. The ornate Victorian entrance off the square had been closed and a new one opened to the side so that the platforms were approached at a forty-five degree angle and some of the interior offices were triangular. The whys were not worth the effort. The smell was still the same, a sort of sooty, oily smell, not at all unpleasant, perhaps because of its associations, like the rich, warm, welcoming petrol smell of a double-decker bus on a cold day, back in the days when there was a cheerful conductor to run up and down the spiral stair collecting fares. The job—on the rare buses that still had conductors—had been taken over by third world immigrants now and they were rarely cheerful.

The Black Prince in the square outside the station was still black but the buildings surrounding him were not. Having been sand-blasted free of their decades of industrial grime they now stood naked in all their lumpy Victorian splendor and turned out to be built, not of black rock as Janet had always supposed, but of a dun-colored stone. Encircling the mounted prince were statues of women, vestal virgins or some such, their nakedness camouflaged by shreds of marble drapery held in just the right places by a mystical, insensible wind. They must have always been there but Janet had never noticed them before.

Inside the station there was a newsstand and a bright yellow snack bar with cubic plastic furniture and the inevitable video game. Out of order. Janet had arrived with plenty of time to spare—the curse of the obsessively punctual—and after buying a ticket she whiled away some time browsing in the bookstore. She settled on a Daphne du Maurier to read on the train and then wandered into the Ladies Lounge. It was a remnant of the original structure, a sizable square waiting room with imitation leather benches around the walls, a bit shabby, and a large chipped mirror on one wall over the mantle of the empty fireplace. Through a short corridor and two more small doors—left-overs of Victorian prudery—were the toilets with the familiar coin slots; they cost more than a penny now but were otherwise the same. There was an enormous somnolent black woman sitting in a corner, her knees spread, her head lolling on her chest; as an intrepid Pakistani woman in flowing sari with numerous children in tow tried to sneak into a toilet without paying, the somnolent being snapped to life and let out and “Oi!” that reverberated through the high-ceilinged room. The Pakistani woman flashed a withering look, closed the door and deposited a coin.

When Janet boarded the train the only free seat was opposite

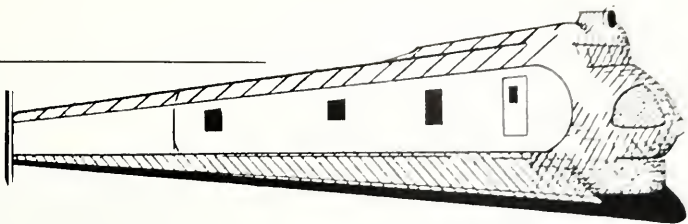
a young man, and following what she had noted was still a question she politely asked, “Is this seat taken?” though it obviously was not, before sitting down. He looked up briefly from his *Chester Guardian*, shook his head and went back to reading. The train left precisely on time. Janet wondered if Margaret Thatcher took credit for that, like Mussolini. Maybe Thatcher too took an efficient rail service was indicative of a revitalized society. Rail had had a considerable facelift lately, to judge by the reopening of Leeds station and the fleet of new trains.

As the train gathered speed Janet looked out of the window. The day was overcast, as always, even though it was August; it seemed to press down so low you felt you could almost reach and touch it. There was the same kind of sky in parts of Yorkshire she'd heard recently. Strange that England had something in common with Alaska. The countryside was rolling hills, covered in a patchwork of small fields that were bordered by dry stone walls. There was no wood to spare for fences here—each stone being without mortar on the one beneath, a centuries-old Yorkshire farmers' art. Strung across the landscape were the small industrial towns of northern England—Batley, Dewsbury—the names familiar from childhood, each one identical. From the train Janet looked down on narrow streets lined with terrace houses, rows upon rows of them, slate roofs, an occasional church, factory chimneys. All black. It was here that the Industrial Revolution had begun; this was its legacy, a dirty daisy chain of ugly, black little towns strung across the north of England's “green and pleasant land” one after the other, sometimes merging together, relieved only by a jewel from an earlier time, a Gothic cathedral or an abbey. If the holy Lamb of God had ever been seen here he would have well and truly trounced by the satanic mills. The New Jerusalem remained to be built.

The young man opposite had put down his paper and was looking out of the window. Janet expected a pass, of course, and was sure how to deal with it; she'd not travelled alone in a very long time and didn't now what to expect, but something was bound to happen. If she handled it badly they'd be stuck opposite each other in horrible embarrassment all the way to Manchester. The important thing, she decided, was to keep cool, just be friendly and natural. She suddenly remembered a train encounter she had heard about—what had Erica Jong called it? A zipliss fuck?—anonymous copulation when the train went into a tunnel? Of course that was one of the old-fashioned trains with individual compartments. It would be a bit tricky in one of these modern jobs, but she might try to ingratiate herself by looking at her reflection in the window. A nice enough looking young man but not the stuff of a picture: neat grey suit, white shirt, nondescript tie. Twenty-four? Sales rep, probably.

“Do you mind if I look at your paper? I can't get into this t

RIDE



o, no, not at all," he said with a light southern accent, not
ney but from somewhere down there. There was such a rich
ty of accents and dialects, she'd forgotten about that. In Lon-
he shopkeepers all called you "dear"; up here it was "love,"
owel rich and earthy, to rhyme with "book." And Americans
thought the English all sounded like Lawrence Olivier.

w was that kind of thing done these days, anyway? Did the
always think he had to make the first move? Probably here d.
England was more of a citadel of male power than she'd
mbered, despite fifteen years of women's lib. The taxi driver,
instance, when she'd first arrived in Leeds: the fellow had talked
e a minute, a running complaint about the weather, Mrs. That-
the economy. "And what do you do, then? Do you work or
ou just a housewife?"

hat do you mean, just a housewife?"

h yeah, that's what my wife sez." The accent was broad West
shire, the vowels flat, open, a no-nonsense working man's ac-
like Grandad's, but the voice didn't have Grandad's rich
one and just sounded coarse. "Sex shi werks 'arder than I do."
" with a disdainful shrug.

English men hadn't changed a whole lot. After handing Janet
aper this one had gone back to gazing out of the window. No
w up. Probably intimidated by her American accent. Little did
ow. Or maybe he was just that rarest of creatures, a faithful
and. Anything was possible. Disconcerting, though, to be
red.

e train was pulling into a station, larger than the others they
passed through without even slowing down. There was a pro-
tion of rails suddenly, joining and crossing each other like
nds of blue-green algae under a microscope. The town was
r but otherwise no different from the others. The train slow-
down and soon a long platform came into view with the name
y painted on several signs to warn arriving passengers that
as almost time to get off: Huddersfield. So this was Hud-
field. "Oodusfild" was the Grandad had pronounced it. It was
e Auntie Muriel used to work, in the chemical factory. Gran-
always pronounced her name with an extra syllable—
ooriel." Huddersfield, like the Amazon, and ancient Babylon,
one of the places Janet had heard of as a child but never
and it had taken on some of the same exotic quality. She'd
r got to the Amazon but she'd made it to Huddersfield finally;
it was, the same narrow streets, the same slate roofs, terraces,
e, the same industrial grime.

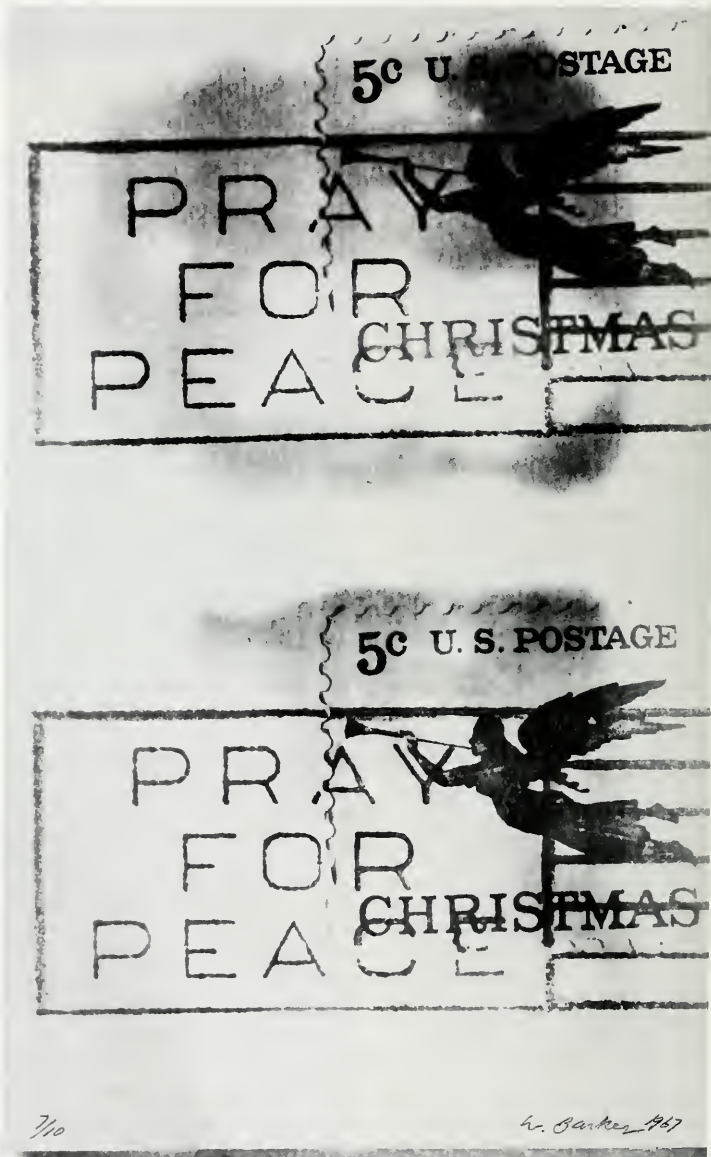
e train stopped briefly then pulled out again and soon left Hud-
field behind. Janet visited the toilet. There were no euphemisms
British Rail, no "public conveniences" or "ladies" and
tlemen." Even so the British lacked the creativity of
ricans in that area; Janet's favorite was "comfort station" on

the Blue Ridge Parkway. Here it was "toilet," no ifs ands or buts
about it. When she came back the young man was still staring out
of the window in the same position. Didn't Englishmen ever get
spielkas? Not a flicker of boredom, no recrossing of legs, or chang-
ing of position. Did the man have a stainless steel bottom? When
would he say something? They were half-way to Manchester
already. He was probably wondering how to go about it, what would
be the best way to approach a foreign woman. One never knew
what their expectations of Englishmen were, after all. Maybe he
would decide to be terribly English and say something like: "I say,
you're an awfully attractive woman to be travelling alone." Nah,
the only people who talked like that were Englishmen in American
novels. He'd probably say something about the weather. It might
be nice to talk to him but she'd have to be careful to draw the line,
not have him hanging around expecting something when they got
to Manchester. Was he wondering what she'd say if he spoke to
her? Was he afraid of a brush-off? Maybe he was thinking of various
train incidents, like *Brief Encounter* or that wonderful one in *The
Bleeding Heart*. Travelling by train might be a commonplace for
him, though, no big deal, none of the romantic connotations it had
for someone who hadn't been on one for—how long? She'd never
been on one in America. There was a whole generation of people
growing up in America who had never been on a train. Incredible
thought.

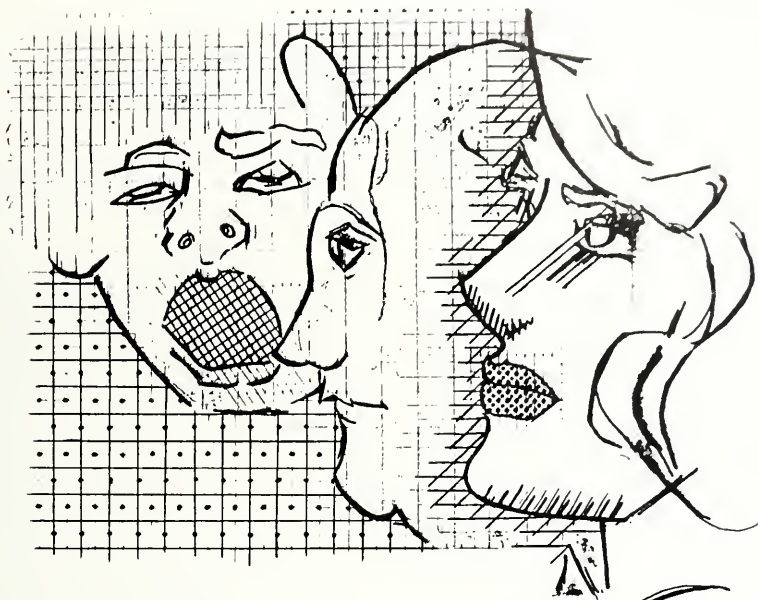
What the hell was wrong with him? Perhaps he was homosexual.
He didn't look it but you could never tell with Englishmen.
He had been watching her reflection in the window though. He was
intimidated; he had to be. She hadn't been ignored this completely
by a man since she was six years old.

The train was slowing down in the outskirts of a city. It couldn't
be Manchester already, surely? but Janet couldn't think of another
city this large in between. He was getting ready to get off. She
started to fold the newspaper but he waved his hand and said, "No,
that's all right," without even looking at her. The train was crawl-
ing past street after street of low houses. It looked just like the
outskirts of Leeds, they could have gone around in a big circle for
all the difference in scenery. She wanted to ask him if it was Man-
chester but wouldn't give him the satisfaction. He was standing
waiting for the train to stop. He was probably one of those stupid
people who stand up and clog the aisles of planes as soon as they
touch down. He jumped down on to the platform as soon as the
train stopped. Janet took her time collecting her things, and follow-
ed. He could still be seen, the son of a bitch, head and shoulders
above the crowd, striding along as quickly as he could without run-
ning, jacket tails flapping, shoulders pivoting, typical Englishman's
walk. She tried to shrug him off as she walked down the platform
and emerged into the monument of Victorian ugliness that is Man-
chester station.

Walter Barker



The Five Cent Angel...Christmas Mail to Nam



Disengaging the Connections

v i r g i n i a d u m o n t

The Duke boys' car stops in the middle of a leap, lands solidly on all four wheels, and takes off up the wall the cops put up. The Duke boys need to get out and fast! But the top of the wall is attached to some kind of force field they can't get out.

ow what?
ow into the secret hiding place, before the cops get the Duke s. They slip inside where it's cool, dark. Also very quiet. Get dy for a trip around the lake.

ason clicks the glove compartment shut as his mother strides ard the car. She jerks her door open, drops into the seat next im. She lets one of her legs dangle outside the car. Then she ngs both legs under the steering wheel, slams the door, and

gropes for the place to put the key. Her eyes are all scrunched up. "Mama?"

She turns toward him, opens her eyes slowly. Her eyes are light gray. After a moment, she looks away, back at the filmy windshield. She blinks a few times.

"Look, Jason, I can't help it."

She sighs, locks her door, finds where the key fits. She stops again and turns to Jason, puts her hand on his head. She slides her hand over his cheek, along his shoulder, touches his waist. Checks the seat belt. Smiles.

"It's okay little buddy. Hey, did you bring the Duke boys? Where are they? In the Batcave?"

"Mama, it's supposed to be a secret."

"Oh, yeah, right, I forgot. I'll keep it under cover, okay? You ready to go?"

"Yup, yup, yup, yup."

He mimics the space monsters on Sesame Street. He likes the red monster the best.

His mother laughs and returns to the business of the key, of starting the car. The engine grinds a few times, then catches. The car vibrates gently as they back up; Jason is glad his mother is smiling, that the Duke boys are safe, that he is going around the lake. His chest is tight with all the gladness.

The seat belt slackens around him as he works himself deep into the seat and draws up his legs. They are in a silver Mustang. Jason opens the window all the way, ready.

I hate it—the weekly trips. I wonder how I tricked myself into letting David get primary custody. Oh yes. He threatened to expose me, my instability. Anything that labelled me unfit. Maybe he's right about me not being normal, well-adjusted. It came down to things like a discussion we had once about "contemplating navels," about responsibility, about making excuses.

"What do you mean, 'more time to think, to free associate?' What the hell does free association mean anyway? What do you do all day?"

I was a little drunk, just a touch high from the warm wine. I tried again to explain, assuming patience, but only barely.

"Okay. If you're always examining things, things like people, ideas, it's like always bleeding, always feeling. Sometimes that makes me feel all dried up inside; it uses me up."

He snorted; justifiably, I think now.

"That really sounds like bullshit."

So I looked at the floor and counted the seconds it took me to inflate my lungs.

All this was in the early stages, when I was attempting to reduce everything around me to purity, clean flat color, clean washes of pigment.

"You act like I'm trying to hurt you," I told him. "But I'm not. Besides, what exactly are you accusing me of?"

David answered by just staring at me, through me, and the conversation ended, nothing resolved, nothing changed. We watched T.V.—a NOVA special on hemophilia, if I remember correctly. I listened for Jason that night, but he did not wake up. We were accomplished at quiet, if nothing else.

I examine the keys in my hand. No wonder we're all too exhausted for much effort now. Twenty minutes once a week is overwhelming. "Mama?"

Jason. I glance at him; he looks worried. I look back out the windshield. At least there's a joint cleverly concealed under the mat—oh, in some ways David wasn't far off about "unfit"—but I want to insure that one trip around the lake isn't relentlessly depressing.

I say something reassuring to Jason, pat him on the head, check his seat belt. I ask about the Duke boys. I'm beginning to get concerned about the Duke boys. Is that sort of thing normal? I may never know because we only went to a counselor once.

I narrowly miss a pine tree as I back the car out of the driveway.

The trip to his father's house is sad and boring; his mother says so. But when he looks at the lake, he always sees lots of things; it's pretty good. Sitting in the front seat, the window open, the wind blowing in his face. It's almost better than the Duke boys.

Jason watches a boy on skis whip through the water. Stuff like that; it's not boring.

W e ride a scenic road that snakes dangerously along lake. If I remove my eyes from the crumbling asphalt long enough, I see brief flashes of water, tiny houses chipped and cracked white masonite siding, undulating banks of kudzu. When I was the passenger, I'd crane my neck, looking at the people fishing from shore, mostly old black women, sitting on overturned plastic buckets. No longer the passenger, I wobble with the road, push my eyes around the next curve. Jason glances at the lake, very quiet.

The road, alternately shadowed and bright, plays tricks with vision, and I feel a headache crawling up the back of my neck. I decide I need to stop at the next deserted picnic table, take some aspirin, maybe get stoned. I glance over at Jason, to ask him what he thinks about stopping. He has fallen asleep, very suddenly, head angled on the arm rest, the classic picture of exhaustion. A good idea to stop, break things up a little.

After about a mile, I see a sign for a scenic rest stop. It is around the very next curve, and I nose the car right up to the picnic table. The place is deserted; normal families don't picnic on Sunday night.

I open my door and get out, stand, stretch. I reach back down into the car, feel under the floor mat for the joint. It's a little cramped, but who cares? Maybe I won't need the aspirin. Jason does move. The weekends take a lot out of him.

I sit on the picnic table and light the joint. I watch Jason slide twisted onto the seat, unsmiling. I find it more pleasant to see my focus to the slice of lake past the front of the picnic table. The pines hover over me, hemming me in. I have to get up, walk around. I walk past the end of the little clearing with the picnic table, past the safety of state maintenance, toward the lake.

After I pass the huddle of pines, I step onto a rocky strip of beach. I look back to the car—I'm only fifty feet away—Jason is still there. In front of me, though, the lake unfolds with what seem to be hundreds of pinpoints of shimmering light. The sun pools slightly about terraced masses of clouds that are banded into subtle variations of mauve, pink, gold. The colors appear to be spreading, merging into each other. The lake is so calm that water and sky melt together at the horizon.

The joint has gone out; I'm more interested in studying the changing, changing sky...

Jason. He might like this.

But he is already maneuvering through the trees, toward the car. "Oh Mama," he says when he reaches my side, "Isn't it beautiful?"

He thinks he sees something, like buildings, maybe like churches or the tall glass buildings in big cities. He doesn't see any people, but there must be some people in a place like that.

Jason walks to the very edge of the water.

There's another city, in the water. It looks real, too.

His mother looks at him, grins. He notices one of her low-nicotine cigarettes in her hand, but it's not lit.

"Mama, do you think there's people in that city, like us?"

He points to the glistening water.

She moves close to him, hugs him with one arm.

"Well, maybe."

Jason looks up into the sky, at the clouds spreading out above his head, and then back at the water.

How did it all get there? How do people get there?"
His mother looks at her feet. Maybe she doesn't know. She says a lot, sometimes.
Does Daddy know?"
He doesn't answer him right away and looks back at the sky. You'll have to ask him."
They stand together for a minute, watching the sky and the lake. They go by on the road behind them.
"We have to go," she says.
"Right. She is supposed to be taking him back to his father, always, and they can't just stay here forever. He knows. I know," he tells her. "It's your legal obligation."

"What?"
His mother looks at him, her mouth open.
"Guess we better go to the car, huh?" he asks.
They turn away from the sky, the lake, the two cities, and they go back to the car, Jason following his mother. Before he reaches the car, he looks back at the lake. The sky seems fuzzier, grayer, the cities are still there.
His mother holds the car door for him, buckles the seat belt, and opens the door. She walks around the car to her side and gets in. Says:

"It's just the way things are, son."
His face looks very straight, her mouth hardly moves.
Jason sits, to look out the window, to look at the lake. He has never before to ask his father about the cities; his father knows

Okay. He's five years old and even knows about legal obligation.

Oh, I needn't tell him about low-tar, low-nicotine cigarettes anymore.

He backs out into the road, stupidly, without checking. But from now on, can I protect him, anyway? I am glad it is only another forty feet to David's house; at least that is not a fiction.

He rides in dazed silence, my stupor caused by both the sky and the lake. I cannot imagine what Jason is thinking, but he leans forward toward the lake, face pressed against the window. When we reach the first traffic light, about a mile from David's house, I remind Jason.

"Don't forget the Duke boys, honey. Remember last time, you were in the Batcave?"

He looks over to me and sighs.

"Oh, yeah."

He fiddles with the latch and pops the glove compartment open. The Duke boys' car is slipped into his pocket by the time we pull out the driveway. All the outside lights blaze, welcoming Jason and accusing me.

"At David, I'm not really late. The order, the legal obligation, is seven thirty, and it's only twenty after. It's not even dark yet. But turn off the engine and the car shudders for a moment. We get careful not to slam doors, avoid loud noises. Jason follows me into the kitchen.

"We have to go to the bathroom," he whispers.

"So go," I answer, "you live here."

He slips off. A door opens and closes. David appears in the hall.

"Hi. Well, your kitchen is immaculate. You should see mine after I've been making peanut butter sandwiches for two days."

"I can imagine. Where's the Germ?"

"Oh come on, don't call him that."

"It's what I call him. Look, where is he?"

He smiles. Risk a joke.

"He's in his own custody."

"What? What the hell does that mean?"

He moves toward me.

"David, the child's pissing, for Christ's sake."

He relaxes a little, stops advancing.

"Well, what took you so long?"

I almost tell him about the clouds, the layers of color, the lake, but words seem clumsy and inaccurate for the images, so I hesitate. Then the moment passes, almost unnoticed, like most moments.

I shrug. "It's a long drive, David."

Jason walks back into the kitchen.

"Hi, Dad," he says.

They embrace.

I offer to get the suitcase; the room is getting smaller by the minute.

I leave the kitchen, fumbling for the car keys in my pocket. I reach the car and unlock the trunk. Jason's small navy suitcase, with "Going to Grandma's" plastered all over it, has slid under the spare. I dislodge the suitcase and slam the trunk shut.

When I get back inside the house, Jason comes over to me, hugs me, buries his face in my neck. David watches, arms folded solidly across his chest.

"Good night, Elenor," he says.

"Good night, David."

Our famous Huntley and Brinkley routine, and with about as much feeling.

"Don't forget to tell Daddy about our weekend, okay?"

Jason smiles a little.

"We had fun, right, Jason?"

"Yeah, and I didn't forget the Duke boys."

We know better than to cry, so we hug again, and I step into the cool evening, gearing up for the drive back, alone and with nothing, spectacular or otherwise, to distract me.

He picks up his suitcase and carries it back to his room. This is his real room. He gets the Duke boys' car out of his pocket and starts undressing. He has to take a bath, his father said, first thing. His father comes into the room, smiling at Jason.

"I missed you, Jason," his father says as he sits on Jason's bed.

"I missed you too, Daddy."

"So what did you do?"

Jason is down to his Hulk underoos. He picks up the Duke boys' car and turns it over in his hand.

"Painted. Played in the yard. Went to town for ice cream. Oh yeah, on the way back, we saw two cities in the water. They were so big and one of them was upside down, in the water. Can people live there, Dad?"

His father makes a face.

"What cities."

"You know, cloud cities. Big ones. In the water. In the sky."

His father pulls Jason over to him and lifts Jason up on the bed. He puts his cheek on Jason's head.

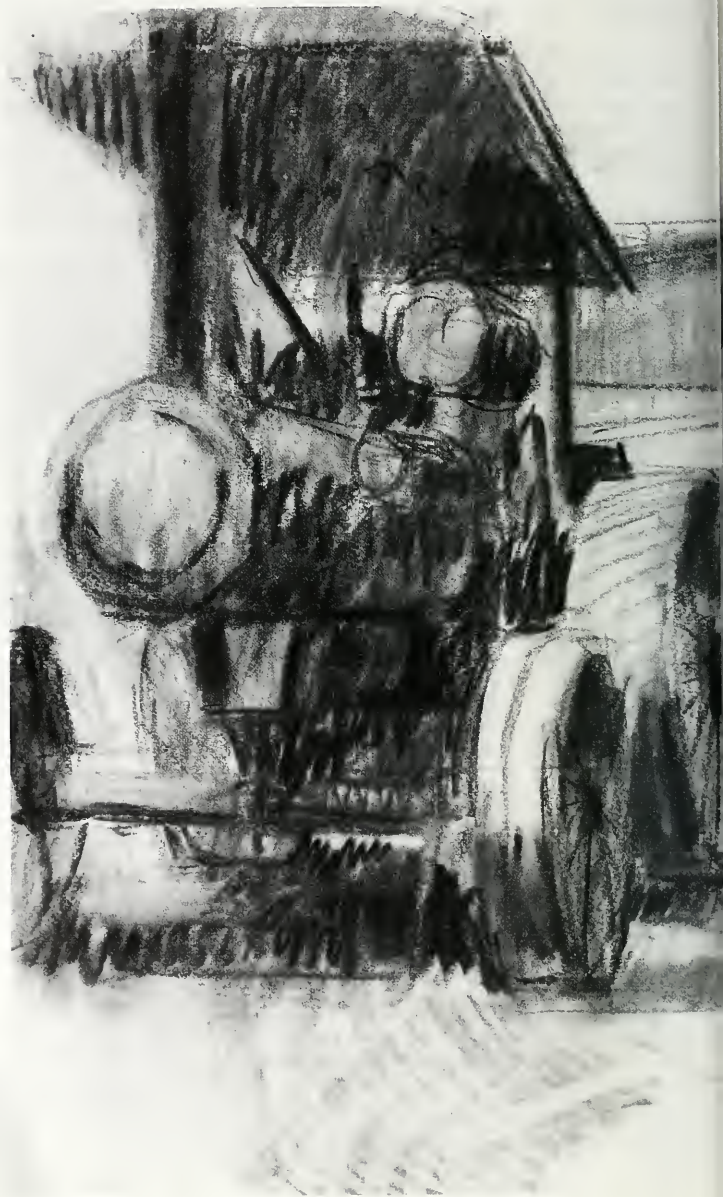
"Oh, you mean clouds, huh, little buddy. Okay. I'll tell you about them."

Jason looks at the Duke boys' car in his hand.

"Okay, yeah, tell me."

So his father starts telling him a story, about vapors and particles and light. But Jason gets sleepy. Maybe he won't have to take a bath. Jason closes his eyes and thinks about the Duke boys. They can do anything, like fly under water and then up into the sky, where the two cities are, the ones his father is telling him about.

MARK G



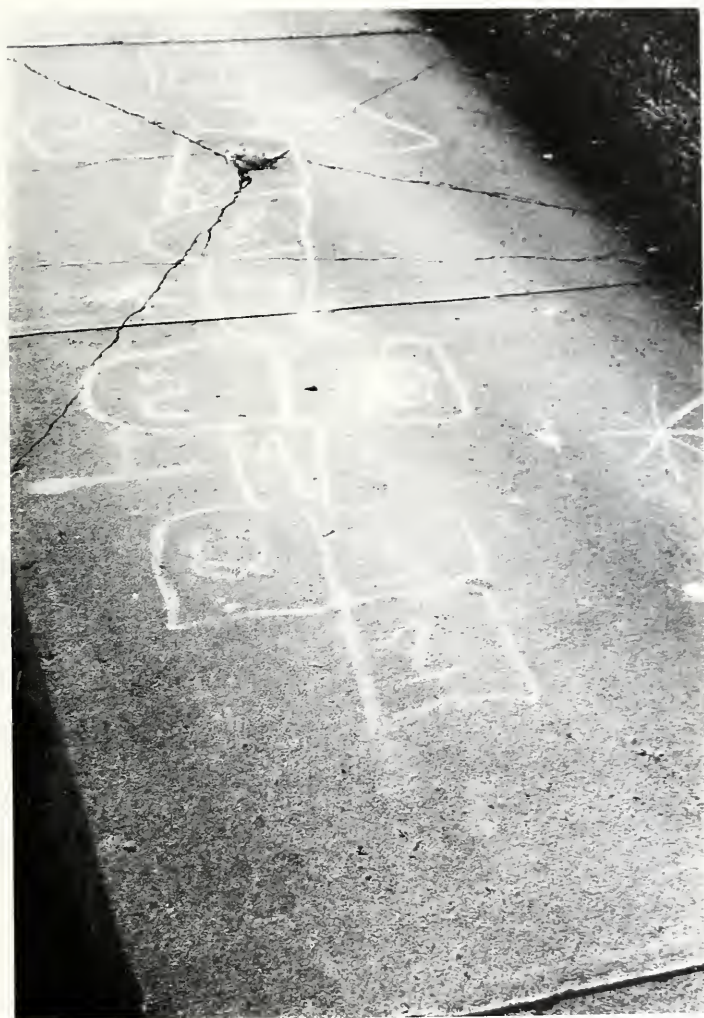
TSEGEN



Sue C.

Perspective Studies







CONTRIBUTORS

er Barker teaches drawing, painting and illustration in the UNC-G Art Department. He has taught at Salem College, Washington University and the Brooklyn Museum School. He has works in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art & Brooklyn Museum, New York; Hirshhorn Collection, Washington, D.C.; the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and others.

Bauchner is a senior English major. She plans to pursue a career in creative writing. She teaches Hebrew at Beth David Synagogue. Julia is from the Chicago area, and she is a winner of the Robbins Scholarship.

C. has been known to teach courses in modern and contemporary art in the Art Department at UNC-G.

inia Dumont won first place in this year's CORADDI short story competition. She received her B.A. in English from Francis Marion College and is now working on her MFA in Creative Writing at UNC-G. She has a son, glas.

Floyd-Kear was born in Bremen, Germany. She has travelled in North America and South America, Europe, the Middle East and Japan. She is a free-lance photographer. Inga is the former administrator of Clinical Legal Education at Wake Forest University. When she completes her degree at UNC-G (major in Business Administration and a minor in Philosophy), she plans to earn her J.D. (with an emphasis in environmental and space law) and then to counsel in law, teach and write on a variety of topics.

ert Gerhart, assistant professor in the UNC-G Art Department, was born in Reading, Pennsylvania. He received his B.F.A. from Pratt Institute (New York) in 1965. After teaching in the Reading Public School System for two years, he enrolled in graduate school at Tyler School of Art, Temple University, Philadelphia, where he received his M.F.A. in 1969. He also attended the Tyler Abroad program in Rome, Italy from 1968-1969. He was an instructor at the School of the Dayton Art Institute (Dayton, Ohio) from 1970-1973. He has taught at UNC-G from 1973 to the present, concentrating in design, color theory and etching. His paintings and prints are in the collections of Philip Morris (World Headquarters, Cabarrus County, N.C.), Rauch Industries (Gastonia, N.C.), Gilbarco, Inc. (Greensboro), the Dillard Collection of the Weatherspoon Gallery at UNC-G and other private and corporate collections.

Gottsegen is an associate professor of painting at UNC-G. He was recently awarded an Excellence Foundation Summer Fellowship to complete a project on Compliance Testing Laboratory for Artists' Paints and Related Materials.

ne V. Grace is a poet from Durham. He has one published collection of poetry.

s Hauselman is a freshman Biology major. His hobbies include photography, tennis, and painting. Chris is from Burlington, and he plans to pursue a career in medicine.

Kelly is a junior History and Business and major. He is from Pennsylvania.

McDowell is working on his second Masters degree. He has sold fiction to several national periodicals including ISAAC ASIMOV'S SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE. He is now teaching two sections of English 102 with an emphasis on science fiction and fantasy. While he was in the MFA Creative Writing program, Fred Chappell served on his thesis committee.

Obermeyer is poetry editor of THE GREENSBORO REVIEW.

Pamela Postma is working on her Ph.D. in English Literature. She is a graduate of the MFA program and has been published in THE GREENSBORO REVIEW, THE GREENSBORO REVIEW, THE CRESENT OBSERVER, and SKYLARK. Pamela is the mother of three children.

Elisabeth Price was featured photographer in the Spring 1984 CORADDI. She is working on her Master of Library Science degree.

Jennifer Sault won second place in the Winter 1984 short story competition. Jennifer is a graduate student.

Rebecca Sexton is a junior Art major pursuing a BFA. She is from Lexington, Kentucky. She is interested in photography, jewelry design and textile design.

Ari Soeleiman is a photographer from Indonesia.

Crystal Wynkoop is an undergraduate at UNC-G. She is a fine arts major with a concentration in design. In addition to photography, sculpture and printmaking, her other interests include music and dance. Crystal feels that having a broad interest in all art forms creates the base for total self expression.

JUDGES

Cynthia K. Ference, director of Green Hill Center for North Carolina Art for the past five years, juried the photography competition. She moved to Greensboro from Pittsburgh, where she was director of the Hewlett Gallery at Carnegie-Mellon University. She is also an exhibiting artist with a recent solo exhibition of drawings at Secca in Winston-Salem.

Candace Flynt, who juried the short story competition, is a graduate of Guilford College and UNC-G's Creative Writing program. Dial Press published her novel CHASING DAD in 1980, and Random House published SINS OF OMISSION in 1984. She has had short stories published in THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY, REDBOOK, THE GREENSBORO REVIEW, and CAROLINA QUARTERLY.

ON THE COVER

20th Century Tibetan yab-yum image. The Tantric image represents the polarity between mystical power (male) and spiritual discipline (female). It is from a genre of wall hanging known as thangka. From the collection of Dr. Paul Courtright.

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